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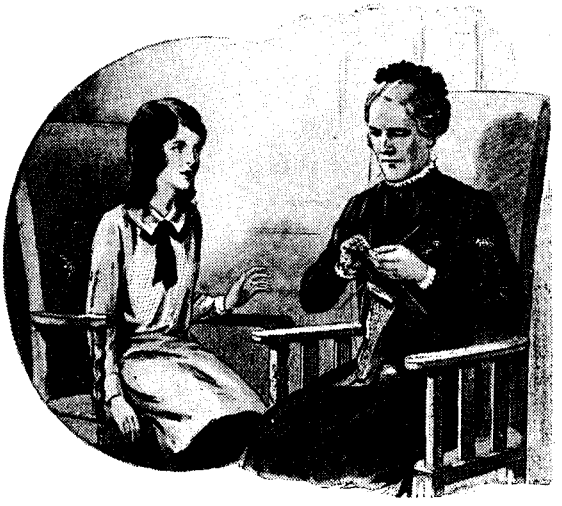
Editorial: Tradition and the Individual Talent



Go to Shrewsbury? Had she heard aright? "Oh, Aunt Elizabeth!" she said.

At a recent Canadian children's literature symposium in Ottawa, the audience groaned loudly when it was announced that there were two sessions on L.M. Montgomery's fiction (fully six symposium papers out of a total of fifteen given). Later, the groaners explained to me that they wondered when in the world academics were going to start paying attention to all of the other great Canadian books out there for children and young adults. They're tired of Anne of Green Gables with her pert pigtails and excess of personality. Tired of her being the only Canadian child character anyone knows. To them, Montgomery is old news: the influence of her Presbyterianism — done; her conception of female adolescence — done; her popularity in Poland, Japan ... wherever — done, done, done; her feminism — done to death. What else could there be to say? they wonder impatiently. Well, we sometimes wonder the same. But, then we attend conferences and hear about the erotic in Montgomery's fiction — yes, the erotic; we read the latest editions of Montgomery's autobiographical writings and wonder where we ever got the idea that she had a sunny disposition; and, of course, we read the papers that come into our office about Montgomery's works. All of these remind us that we're not done with Maud.

Like no other children's writer in Canada, Montgomery has inspired

a critical tradition. It is difficult to say what it is about her work that has brought so many scholars to it, but surely two simple reasons are its publication dates and its continued popularity: it has been around long enough to have acquired a sizeable number of critical articles, including debates — always a lure for critics — and it is still read. Mary Rubio will tell you, however, that the critical tradition hasn't come easily. It has only been since the rise of feminist and cultural criticism that Montgomery has received serious critical attention. Further, contrary to general impression, the Montgomery tradition is not a conservative one. As the articles in this issue of *CCL* attest, it has moved beyond the pious exegetics of New Criticism. Lefebvre's piece, "Walter's Closet," looks at the unsaid in *Rilla of Ingleside* and carefully suggests that the characterization of one of Montgomery's ideal males reflects cultural tropes that associate him with homosexuality. Lawson's piece enters into the ongoing discussion of Montgomery's conceptions of female agency by using the psychoanalytic theory of Abraham and Torok to analyse traumatic inheritance in the Emily books. And so the tradition continues ... and flourishes.

Of course, what Montgomery herself would make of such work as Lefebvre's and Lawson's is only a matter of humorous speculation. Some would have her rolling in her proverbial grave or shaking her melancholic husband off his couch of gloom to read him the outrageous things the critics say; others say she would be thrilled at the serious attention; others still remark that her response is neither here nor there: the work should stand or fall on its own. This last remark forms the foundation for one part of a debate that we feature in the second section of this issue: what should be the relationship between critic and author? Are critics responsible to authors for what they print, especially if it is unflattering? Should critics be more sensitive to the exigencies of a writer's life — from sales to self-esteem? Should writers strive to understand better what critics are trained to do? What writers who are alive and well make of some of the articles *CCL* publishes about their work is seldom clear to us. Last summer, however, we published an interview with Welwyn Wilton Katz that made it abundantly clear what she thought of some parts of the critical tradition accruing about her work. Herein we print the responses to that interview. And so the tradition continues ... and flourishes.

Marie Davis

Présentation: Critiques et auteurs; le dit et le dicible

Lors d'un récent colloque sur la littérature de jeunesse au Canada anglais, plusieurs participants ont exprimé ouvertement des réserves sur le fait que six des quinze communications allaient porter sur l'oeuvre de Lucy Maud Montgomery. Selon eux, il n'y aurait rien de neuf à proposer sur cet auteur: en effet, sur ses influences religieuses, sa conception de la féminité et de l'adolescence, son immense popularité à l'étranger ... tout aurait été dit, étudié, analysé. Pourtant, la parution de ses écrits autobiographiques laisse entrevoir d'autres avenues de recherche; par exemple, sur le retour du refoulé, les désirs et les pulsions amoureuses que masquent mal les journaux intimes.

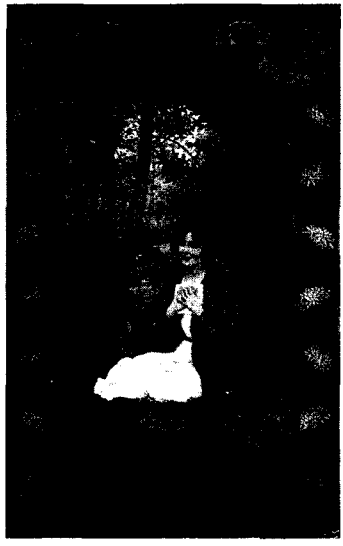
À cet égard, le présent numéro publie deux articles qui suggèrent une relecture plutôt radicale de l'oeuvre de L.M. Montgomery. Selon Benjamin Lefebvre, les traits attribués à l'un des personnages masculins idéalisés de *Rilla of Ingleside* correspondraient à des caractéristiques traditionnellement assimilées à l'homosexualité. Dans un ordre d'idées semblable, pour Kate Lawson, les traumatismes reliés à l'émergence de l'identité féminine dans la série Émilie de la Nouvelle Lune indiquent, à la lumière de la psychanalyse, une filiation maternelle pour le moins problématique.

Il serait facile de spéculer sur la réaction qu'aurait eue L.M. Montgomery devant de telles analyses sur l'identité sexuelle, à des années-lumière de son univers mental. Mais le rapport entre l'auteur et ses exégètes devient plus délicat de son vivant. Par exemple, qu'arrive-t-il lorsqu'un écrivain rejette les interprétations de son oeuvre ou réagit mal à des commentaires mitigés sur la valeur de ses productions? Un critique est-il redevable de son jugement à l'auteur? L'on consultera avec profit le dossier que nous rassemblons sur les réactions suscitées par une entrevue donnée par Welwyn Walton Katz, publiée l'an denier à la *CCL/LCJ*. L'échange de lettres, de réponses et de notes rectificatives montre l'ampleur du débat et la douloureuse relation entre créateur et exégètes.

Quant à nos lecteurs francophones, ils pourront prendre connaissance de la seconde partie du dossier de Jean-François Boutin consacré à la définition de la littérature de jeunesse; cette fois-ci, il s'agit plus particulièrement des conceptions que défendent les praticiens et les spécialistes du domaine de la production littéraire destinée à la jeunesse. Enfin, la *CCL/LCJ* renoue avec une activité qu'elle avait délaissée ces dernières années: le profil d'écrivains francophones. Jean-Denis Côté nous fait part d'un entretien substantiel que lui a accordé Angèle Delaunois, lauréate du Prix du gouverneur Général. L'on y verra non sans plaisir que l'esprit critique n'est pas l'apanage des seuls ... critiques.

Walter's Closet

• *Benjamin Lefebvre* •



***Résumé**: L'auteur soutient que la vie et la mort du personnage Walter Blythe au centre du roman* **Rilla d'Ingleside** *de L.M. Montgomery sont peu typiques à l'intérieur des usages du Bildüngsroman pour lesquels ses oeuvres narratives sont connues. Sa représentation habituelle de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard comme espace familial idyllique sert plutôt dans cet ouvrage à symboliser la protection physique et émotive ainsi que l'innocence sexuelle d'un personnage que l'on perçoit comme «différent». Cette différence n'est pas sans rappeler la thématique du placard homosexuel.*

***Summary**: This paper argues that the life and death of Walter Blythe at the centre of L.M. Montgomery's novel* **Rilla of Ingleside** *are completely atypical within the boundaries of the Bildüngsroman for which Montgomery's work is renowned. Instead of representing Prince Edward Island as an Edenic concept of home and family, here Montgomery employs the imagery of the Island to symbolize the physical safety, the emotional security, and the sexual innocence of a character who is always seen as "different" in ways that are often associated with the homosexual closet.*

At first glance, the death of Walter Blythe at the centre of L.M. Montgomery's novel *Rilla of Ingleside* seems to have as its primary purpose to emblematize what millions of Canadians lost during World War I: Walter leaves behind a heartbroken family, an unfinished university degree, an artistic potential that will never be developed, and the unrequited feelings from a young woman that are best left unexpressed. Beneath the surface, however, Walter's life and death are completely atypical within the boundaries of the *Bildüngsroman* for which Montgomery's work is renowned, where the girl marries the boy as a reward for finding an outlet for self-expression with the lush scenery of Prince Edward Island representing an Edenic concept of home and family. With Walter, Montgomery employs the imagery of the Island to symbolize his physical safety, his emotional security and his sexual innocence, in ways that are often associated with the homosexual closet.[1]

Mary Rubio points out that Montgomery, like other female writers of her time, incorporates "serious social criticism into her novels" while "remaining within the confines of genteel female respectability" (8); at the same time, Elizabeth Epperly suggests that "Montgomery's stories often support [...] stereotypes about men and women and the supposed battle of the sexes" (9). But Walter is no typical Montgomery hero.[2] The second son of Anne Shirley and Gilbert Blythe is uninterested in medicine and football and courting girls as are his brother Jem and his childhood pal, Kenneth Ford. Instead, despite Walter's "passionate love for beauty" (*RV* 17) and his ambition to be a poet, he seems completely blind to the interest of shy, angelic Una Meredith. He is the sensitive, misunderstood boy-poet who struggles in many ways to fit in within a society that seems keen to reject him. Heroines like Anne Shirley and Emily Byrd Starr are allowed to explore their own unconventional identity through their writing without straying too far from conventionality; with Walter, the gap between conventionality and unconventionality is not as easily bridged.[3] This discrepancy is evidenced in the three books in which Walter appears at three stages of his life: as a child (ages six to eleven) in *Anne of Ingleside*, as a young adolescent (ages twelve to thirteen) in *Rainbow Valley*, and as a young adult (ages 20 to 22) in *Rilla of Ingleside*. Any study of these three novels together, however, is complicated by the fact that they were not written in sequence; consequently, this paper will focus first on *Rainbow Valley* (1919), followed by *Rilla of Ingleside* (1921),[4] and will consider *Anne of Ingleside* to be a "prequel" to these first two that was published in 1939.[5]

Always interested in creating contrasts between her characters, Montgomery deliberately makes Walter completely unlike his older brother Jem, a more secondary character.[6] Although not done so explicitly, the initial descriptions of the two boys at the beginning of *Rainbow Valley* immediately set them up as total opposites, setting the tone for the reader's assessment of their relationship as it develops throughout three books: Jem, who is every-

thing boyish and masculine, approaches his existence scientifically and excels in mathematics, while Walter, described as girly and milksoppish, a "hop out of kin" as far as looks are concerned (17), leans toward poetry and the emotional. Jem eventually goes to medical school, following in his father's footsteps, while Walter has inherited the "vivid imagination and passionate love for beauty" from his mother (17). Walter reads the classics as a child and has a sophisticated understanding for the story of "The Pied Piper" and the chivalry poetry of Tennyson, while Jem's interest in storybooks about pirates and soldiers is decidedly naive and child-like. Jem is a chieftain in school, conforming to a child's expectation of a child, while Walter is "not thought very highly of" (17).

This contrast becomes more significant when they reach adulthood. At the news that England has declared war on Germany, Jem immediately announces his intention to enlist "as coolly as if he were arranging the details of a picnic" (*RI* 41) whereas Walter hides behind the typhoid from which everyone believes he has not fully recovered and retreats to the innocence and privacy of Rainbow Valley. Jem's naiveté, influenced by his childhood fantasies of being a soldier brought upon by the books he has read, is emblematic of the "unthinking enthusiasm" of the thousands of young soldiers who enlisted, without whom "the war could not have been fought" (Epperly 104). Walter, on the other hand, is the only younger person (with the exception of Gertrude Oliver) who initially grasps the implications of the declaration of war with none of Jem's childlike enthusiasm:

> Before this war is over [...] every man and woman and child in Canada will feel it — you, Mary, will feel it — feel it to your heart's core. You will weep tears of blood over it. The Piper has come — and he will pipe until every corner of the world has heard his awful and irresistible music. It will be years before the dance of death is over — years, Mary. And in those years millions of hearts will break. (33-34)

Walter's attitudes about fighting and pain are particularly important in a novel in which the roles of men and women are so clearly defined. Masculine Jem's assumption of war as adventure is deliberately contrasted to Walter's paralyzing fear, not of death itself but of being "mangled or blinded, to keep on dying." Walter's conclusion — "I should have been a girl," which he expresses in a "burst of passionate bitterness" (*RI* 46) — is reminiscent of another atypical Montgomery male, Captain Jim, who confides to Anne in *Anne's House of Dreams*:

> I don't think I'm a coward, Mistress Blythe — I've looked an ugly death in the face more than once without blenching. But the thought of a lingering death does give me a queer, sick feeling of horror. (199)

Walter's conviction of his cowardice makes him feel inadequate in his masculinity and leads to morbidity and self-loathing.

The incident of the fist-fight with Dan Reese is the first instance in which the twelve-year-old Walter is called upon to confront his feelings of cowardice and to defend himself, an episode often referred to in *Rilla of Ingleside*. Epperly calls it the "central dramatic event" of *Rainbow Valley* and "Montgomery's allegory for the First World War," and describes it as "A dastard belittles faith and womanhood [...] and a young knight vanquishes him" (97). But this episode has much more to it than that. The fist-fight is brought about not only by Dan's insult toward Faith Meredith and toward Walter's mother, but by a feeling of inadequacy that Dan instills in him and which will follow Walter to adulthood. Dan insults Faith by calling her "Pig-girl" in reference to an earlier episode in which Faith and Walter tear down Main Street on pigs (and for which Walter takes the blame even though it was Faith's idea). Faith does not expect Walter to defend her, since "he seemed to her an inhabitant of a world of his own, where different traditions prevailed," nor does she think him cowardly; but Walter feels inadequate because Jem would have defended Faith and because he simply cannot "call names," an ability of which Dan has "unlimited command" (111).

Walter is finally provoked into pushing Dan off the fence, not by Dan's insult to Faith and to Walter's mother, but by Dan's unabashed "hello, Miss Walter," and the insulting chant, "Coward, cowardy-custard / Stole a pot of mustard / Coward, cowardy-custard!" (120). Why, then, does Walter repeatedly insist he is fighting Dan to defend his mother and Faith, with no mention of his own dignity? Walter's terror of being hurt and defeated and shamed, deliberately contrasted with Jem's simultaneous daydream of being a famous general, is something he cannot even express in words: "Talking of it seemed to give it a reality from which he shrank" (123).

Walter's repeated blows and the savageness with which he fights illustrate his unconscious desire to prove his masculinity, to react against the feelings of inadequacy that Dan instills in him. Despite the fact that he wins the fight, however, Walter is still not like other boys. His classmates are terrified of him; none of them have ever dreamed that "Miss Walter" could be capable of such a "savage fury" (124). When it is all over, when Walter sees the blood and the reactions of his classmates, he retreats to Rainbow Valley and feels "none of the victor's joy" but instead a sense of "duty done and honour avenged" (125). Whose honour? His own? Montgomery does not make it clear: Walter realizes that "His lip was cut and swollen and one eye felt very strange" (125), making his ability to see and to express himself temporarily marred.

Susan Baker, the housekeeper, is glad he has fought: "Perhaps it may knock that poetry nonsense out of him" (*RV* 126). Poetry, then, is a euphemism for Walter's lack of masculinity, based on the often violent ways his

ambition is perceived. Susan's brutal honesty is important given the position she is in as the only adult in the household who does not give the unconditional love of a parent. She tells twelve-year-old Walter *to his face* that his recurring toothache, which is agonizing, is the result of "sitting up in the cold garret [...] writing poetry trash," that poetry is "mostly a lot of lies," and hopes the pain "would be a lesson" to him (109). What kind of damage is this likely to do to a sensitive child's self-esteem, especially considering that Walter himself repeats this encounter to Faith in his own words? Susan's distrust of anything poetic, a standard, old-school Presbyterian response, is clear from her first appearance in *Anne's House of Dreams*, but her intention to "hope and pray that blessed boy will outgrow the tendency" is uncalled for: writing poetry is not considered a "tendency," nor should a twelve-year-old boy's doing so be seen as such a big deal in itself. Why, then, is Susan's opinion of Walter's "silly rhymes" emphasized more than Anne's? Susan finally decides that "If he does not [outgrow it] — we must see what emulsion and cod-liver oil will do" (51), once again making a direct link between poetry and the physical body. Why does she see writing poetry as a manifestation of a physical ailment, like constipation, that she wants to flush out of him?[7]

As an adult, Walter himself ties his poetry to his self-respect, and, with that, to the rejection of the feelings of inadequacy that have been instilled in him since early childhood and particularly since the war began; when he enlists, he tells Rilla that "tonight for the first time since Jem left I've got back my self-respect. I could write poetry" (*RI* 118).

Despite the seven-year gap between *Rainbow Valley* and *Rilla of Ingleside*, Walter changes very little during this time. At 20, he is identical to when he is thirteen — lying on the grass, reading poetry, daydreaming, and commenting on how beautiful everything is (Jem's attitudes about war, as mentioned earlier, have not matured from childhood either). Walter is, in a sense, a child grown older, which is exactly how Montgomery describes the kind of *female* adolescent character she has to write about, the "sweet insipid thing [...] to whom the basic realities of life [...] are quite unknown" (*My Dear Mr. M.* 119). This description applies to Walter as well: while fifteen-year-old Rilla longs for beaux in the plural (13) and for Kenneth Ford to ask her to dance, Walter, at 20, seems to be totally oblivious to the possibility of participating in romantic/sexual relationships in general and to Una Meredith in particular, something that does not seem to concern anyone else.[8] In fact, Walter and Una are the only two of Montgomery's more prominent characters who grow up together but whose relationship does not evolve toward courtship and marriage. Not because of a mutual lack of interest: we are told early on that Una "had a secret, carefully-hidden fancy for Walter Blythe that nobody but Rilla ever suspected." What is not clear is why "Rilla sympathized with it and wished Walter would return it" (*RI* 24). She writes in her journal that Una is just a perfect angel but that Walter "never seems to think

of her in that way" (70). Why doesn't he see her — or anyone — "in that way," given the repeated emphasis on his love and appreciation for all things beautiful? Why is Rilla resigned to the fact that Una's love will always be helplessly unrequited?[9]

Walter seems quite sure of himself the night before he leaves for war when he says to Rilla in private, "I'm not leaving any girl to break her heart about me — thank God for that" (124). But if he is unaware of Una's feelings for him, why is it that, when he leaves, he kisses her with the "warm, comradely kiss of a brother," especially considering that "He had never kissed her before" and "she had only offered her hand"? (127). Not only does this kiss validate Rilla's suspicions of Una's feelings for him and gives her a reason to give her Walter's posthumous letter later on, but Montgomery is giving Walter a final opportunity to prove his masculinity in public. Because of this demonstration, Walter is able to leave behind earlier impressions of him as someone whose masculinity is defective, and allows the community to see him for the last time as a young man who has finally entered the heterosexual order which he has so far resisted.

The final item of comparison between Jem and Walter is made immediately after Walter's death by an incidental character who comments that "It's such a blessing that it was Walter [who was killed] and not Jem. Walter was a member of the church, and Jem wasn't" (189). This may appear to be merely a passing statement, but often, Montgomery says much more in such throwaway remarks as these than meets the eye. Nearly all of Montgomery's characters go to church, and to many of them, religion is a very important priority. Whether they are actual *members* of the church, however, while it is implied, is only pointed out in a few occasions throughout Montgomery's body of work to promote social standing, social conformity, or an assurance that church members will find salvation in the afterlife. When Aunt Becky dies in *A Tangled Web*, William Y. is "by no means [...] sure" of Becky's salvation because "she wasn't a member of the church" (95). Ruby Gillis, dying of consumption in *Anne of the Island*, is afraid of death itself but not afraid that she may not go to heaven; after all, "I'm a church member" (105).[10]

Why, then, is Walter a member of the church and Jem not — especially considering that by this time Jem is engaged to the Presbyterian minister's daughter, Faith? Is Walter more concerned about his salvation than is his older brother? Or, from another angle, is there something about Walter that is religiously problematic, making his salvation questionable? (At the same time, what does this say about Jem's apparent rejection of religion in favour of science?) Considering Montgomery's and the narrator's never-ending concern about Walter's soul, this passing remark merits a closer examination. During Walter's first appearance in *Rainbow Valley*, we are told that "with Walter food for the soul always took first place" over food for the flesh (19); is Montgomery commenting on Walter's future sexual appetites as

well? Later, following the fist-fight with Dan Reese, Walter confides in Mr. Meredith, the minister, leading him "into some sealed and sacred chambers of the lad's soul wherein not even Di [his sister and confidante] had ever looked" (86). What kind of secret cannot be revealed to anyone (including the reader) but the minister?

This concern returns with renewed intensity in *Rilla of Ingleside*. Fifteen-year-old Rilla feels excluded when she sees Walter and Di "together, deep in confidential conversation" (24) and suspects that Walter tells more of his secrets to Di than to her, even though she vows she would "*never* tell them to a single soul" (13). When Rilla points out that Walter is not strong enough to fight, Walter argues, "Physically I am. Sound as a bell. The unfitness is in the soul and it's a taint and a disgrace" (90). When he finally does enlist, it is "for my own sake — to save my soul alive. It will shrink to something small and mean and lifeless if I don't go" (118).

And of course Susan Baker is there, as if on cue: "It may cure him of being a poet, at least [...] and that would be something" (120).[11]

In 1920, after finishing *Rilla of Ingleside*, Montgomery vowed that she was done with the "Anne gang" forever (*SJ* II 390; *My Dear Mr. M.* 103). Fifteen years and many books later, she finally broke that vow and wrote two more *Anne* novels that fill the gaps between the first six. In *Anne of Ingleside* (1939), the second of these two books and a "prequel" to *Rainbow Valley*, Montgomery revises the continuity of the overall story by writing about Anne's children when they are very young, adding to what we already know of Walter and his siblings, whose characters are already defined. Walter's "future" death, already known to the reader, is more obviously foreshadowed; although episodes dealing prominently with Walter are few, questions of gender identity, the continued comparison of Jem and Walter, the appropriateness of his ambition to be a poet and the soul/body dichotomy are more readily explored, particularly by minor and incidental characters and by the intrusive narrator. Before either Jem or Walter is eight years old, we see that Jem is already conforming to traditional gender norms while Walter has subconsciously rejected them: when Jem fails to make another boy's dog love him, he wishes he were a girl "so's I could cry *and* cry!" (137); Walter's eyes fill with tears at the very sight of Aunt Mary Maria (22). An incidental character insists that Walter is a sissy because "he writes po'try. Do you know what I'd do if I'd a brother that writ po'try? I'd drown him ... like they do kittens" (173). Leslie Ford looks at him and realizes "he had the face of a genius ... the remote, detached look of a soul from another star. Earth was not his habitat" (86). Another incidental character remarks that the six-year-old Walter "did be having an old soul in a young body," to which the intrusive narrator adds, "It might be that the old soul knew too much for the young brain to understand always" (37), which is linked to his choice of reading material in *Rainbow Valley* and makes him increasingly emblematic and less real.

Walter's lack of masculinity is noticed even by Jem when they play pirates and Walter balks at walking the plank. Jem wonders "if Walter really was enough of a stalwart to be a buccaneer, though he smothered the thought loyally and had more than one pitched and successful battle with boys in school who called Walter 'Sissy Blythe'" (129).[12] Looking back to Walter's fist-fight in *Rainbow Valley* where the brave, active man rescues the helpless, passive woman, Montgomery is now giving Walter a role that is traditionally female, the role that Faith played twenty years earlier. Further, not only is Walter compared to Jem, but now Anne compares him to the rest of her children, commenting that "Walter is by way of being a poet. He isn't like any of the others" (12).

The first episode in which Walter is featured prominently is when he is sent off to the Parkers just as Anne is about to give birth to Rilla, an incident that Genevieve Wiggins calls "a serious failure on the part of those model parents Anne and Gilbert, who give no reason for his being sent away" (82); we the readers are aware there is reluctance to speak about childbirth and a worry about Anne's health, but the six-year-old Walter, from whose perspective we read this, is unaware of these things. It is also a devastating moment for young Walter, who "had again hard work to keep from crying" because Gilbert drives away without saying goodbye. "It was only too plain that nobody loved him. Mother and Father used to, but they didn't any longer" (39). Further, sending Walter away for two weeks, which terrifies him, is an experience that both Gilbert and Aunt Mary Maria hope will cure some of his flaws. During a discussion in which Anne worries about Walter who is "so very sensitive and imaginative," Gilbert argues that he is "Too much so" and seems keen on changing him: "I believe that child is afraid to go upstairs in the dark. It will do him worlds of good to give and take with the Parker fry for a few days. He'll come home a different child," after which Anne, of course, realizes that "No doubt Gilbert was quite right" (36). Aunt Mary Maria, who finds Walter "far too nervous and high-strung," echoes this hope to Walter's face: "Well, Mrs. Dr. Parker will probably cure you of some of your notions" (37).

Walter feels threatened and vulnerable when Mrs. Parker leaves him to play with her children and their cousins, including two boys who are several years older. He "did not like [Andy Parker's] looks from the first" and doesn't care for Fred Johnson either "though he was a good-looking chap" (39). Andy, who "had made up his mind that Walter was a sissy," decides to tease and threaten him, asking Walter how he would like being pinched black and blue. He and Walter even argue whose father is the better-looking (43). Later, Walter is terrified by the other children's announcement that his mother is about to die, a deliberate attempt to frighten him, and feels scared because he has to sleep alone for the first time: there is "Always Jem or Ken near him, warm and comforting" (46). He then sneaks out of the house and walks the six miles home in the middle of the night, confronting his fear

of the dark and of being out alone. When he is safely home, he gravely admits to Susan that he "suffered awful agony of mind," to which the intrusive narrator adds, "But nobody must ever know how scared he had really been" (52). This need for secrecy and discretion about his feelings, as seen in *Rainbow Valley* and *Rilla of Ingleside*, will follow him throughout his life.

So far it has been stated that Walter is an atypical male Montgomery character, one who is noticeably unlike other boys, who seems as asexual at 20 as when he is thirteen, whose ambition to be a poet is widely frowned upon, whose masculinity is perceived as inadequate and whose salvation could be seen as a cause for concern. By making Walter the hero of *Rilla of Ingleside*, Montgomery is expanding the notion of manhood, widening the boundaries to encompass this non-traditional male. Not only is Walter described explicitly as feminine and artistic, poetic and romantic, stereotypes associated with male homosexuality, but Montgomery does not show him taking an interest in girls, not allowing him to enter the heterosexual dynamic. This asexuality is a deliberate contrast with other Montgomery males, such as Teddy Kent and Hilary Gordon, who are also sensitive and emotional but whose heterosexuality is never questioned. Montgomery chooses not to give Walter this heterosexuality. Walter goes to war to prove to himself and to others that he is a man, and, in doing so, he is destroyed.

Walter's closet, then, is Prince Edward Island — or, more specifically, Rainbow Valley, which encompasses everything about childhood innocence and protection against the harsh realities of life, ideals that Walter wants future generations to enjoy. It is not accidental that Walter is responsible for naming it. Kingsport, Nova Scotia, where Walter attends university, is where he receives a "cruel anonymous letter" that is "more conspicuous for malice than for patriotic indignation" (*RI* 90), as well as an envelope that contains only a white feather, once again making him feel inadequate because of his feelings of cowardice. At the same time, the world outside Rainbow Valley is where Rilla hears a slur against Walter (*RI* 108), something so horrible that she cannot write it down (and consequently is lost to the reader; 87). It is here that Walter and Rilla have their grown-up talks right before he goes off to war; it is here that Rilla reads Walter's last letter and unselfishly gives it to Una; it is here that Walter, as a child, retreats after the fist-fight with Dan Reese and opens up to John Meredith; it is here that Rilla can temporarily escape from the outside world; it is here that Walter remarks that "A white birch is a beautiful Pagan maiden who has never lost the Eden secret of being naked and unashamed" (*RI* 82).

It is also here that Walter, standing in this dear spot for the last time, sees the ghosts of his old playmates as innocent children again, along with "the old Walter that had been himself lying on the grass reading poetry or wandering through palaces of fancy." Those "little ghosts of other days" say

to him, "*We* were the children of yesterday, Walter — fight a good fight for the children of today and tomorrow" (125).

Walter does fight — is awarded a medal for bravery — and then dies. Walter's death, says Epperly, "is clearly emblematic of something else in the book — of the spirit of sacrifice itself" (121). More than that, on a personal level, Walter's death is inevitable because he has seen the reality of the world: he even writes to Rilla that he would rather die than return home because the world "could never be beautiful for me again" (191). Even his body cannot return home; it is buried in an anonymous grave "somewhere in France."

Most significantly, Walter is purified of any shortcoming when he dies. The effeminate, milksoppish boy-poet has not only become a man, but "his Colonel said he was the bravest man in the regiment" (275). Even his poetry, scorned in his youth, is now celebrated: the publication of his poem "The Piper," which the narrator refers to as "the one great poem of the war" (167), dismisses contributions of such real-life war poets as Owen, Brooke, and McRae, whose "In Flanders Fields" can be seen as a prototype for Walter's poem. At the news that Germany and Austria have sued for peace, Walter's mark as a poet is validated by the family when Rilla comments on the price they've paid during the last four years for their victory:

> 'Not too high a price for freedom,' said Gertrude softly. 'Was it, Rilla?'
>
> 'No,' said Rilla, under her breath. She was seeing a little white cross on a battlefield of France. 'No — not if those of us who live will show ourselves worthy of it — if we "keep faith."'
>
> 'We *will* keep faith,' said Gertrude. She rose suddenly. A silence fell around the table, and in the silence Gertrude repeated Walter's famous poem 'The Piper.' (267)[13]

Anne of Ingleside ends with an adult Anne Blythe visiting the rooms of all her children while they sleep, a fitting ending not only to Montgomery's 21st book but, if read chronologically, the end of Montgomery's body of work published in her lifetime:

> Walter was smiling in his sleep as someone who knew a charming secret. The moon was shining on his pillow through the bars of the leaded window ... casting a shadow of a clearly defined cross on the wall above his head. In long after years Anne was to remember that and wonder if it were an omen of Courcelette [...] But tonight it was only a shadow ... nothing more. (273)

Indeed, Walter Blythe was full of secrets, offering only glimpses of them to Montgomery's readers and carrying the majority of them with him to the cross-marked grave "somewhere in France."

Notes

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Throughout the text, Montgomery's own use of an ellipsis is kept standard, while the ellipses in brackets [...] are mine.

1 Mark Mitchell and David Leavitt identify Herman Melville's short story "I and My Chimney" as the source of "the closet" and its integrity: "The wife of 'I' supposes the chimney to contain a secret closet, and badgers her husband to open it. In the end, however, 'I' prevails: 'Besides, even if there were a secret closet, secret it should remain, and secret it shall. Yes, wife, here for once I must say my say. Infinite sad mischief has resulted from the profane bursting open of secret recesses'" (22). Parenthetically, when Anne leaves for Redmond in *Anne of the Island*, Davy Keith hides in a clothes closet, refusing to say goodbye to her. Later, when Anne and Gilbert are on the ferry to Nova Scotia, she prattles off a long speech about homesickness and then adds, as an afterthought, "I wonder if Davy has come out of the closet yet" (19).

2 In his thought-provoking article "L.M. Montgomery's *Rilla of Ingleside*: Intention, Inclusion, Implosion," Owen Dudley Edwards echoes Elizabeth Epperly's definition of Walter as the hero of *Rilla of Ingleside* and refers to *Rilla* as "Montgomery's *War and Peace*" (126). It should also be noted that Walter is the hero of a book that Epperly calls "Montgomery's celebration of the female" (112).

3 Anne and Emily are also allowed to write without much censure. Anne has complete creative freedom despite Marilla's mild disapproval and Mr. Harrison's harsh criticisms; as an adult, her work is occasionally referred to but never explored. Emily is encouraged by an enlightened teacher and eventually receives begrudging approval from Aunt Elizabeth once the cheques start coming in. Teddy Kent and Hilary Gordon, Montgomery's other male artists-in-embryo, have major obstacles — Teddy's mother is psychopathically overprotective of him and Hilary has no money and little encouragement — yet these obstacles are easily overcome in their attempts to express themselves creatively. Only with Walter is artistic expression criticized and considered problematic when linked to gender identity.

4 Interestingly, approximately half the works cited lists 1920 as *Rilla*'s publication date instead of 1921. What at first seems to be a simple discrepancy is in fact much more complex. Although *Rilla* was released in 1921 in all other countries, there is a first Canadian edition (McClelland and Stewart) whose copyright date is 1920 (see Russell *xvi* and 36). Because Montgomery finished writing the novel on 24 August 1920, it seems unlikely that it could have been issued that same year. However, because this mystery has not yet been fully investigated, scholars continue to use both dates.

5 Near the end of her life, Montgomery assembled a collection of poems, short stories and sketches that was meant to continue the *Anne* series; titled *The Blythes Are Quoted* and covering a 30-year time span between 1906 and the late 1930s, it is an interesting manuscript to examine given that Walter's death is once again at its centre. Because it has never been published as such, references to it appear in this

paper's endnotes only. Two versions of the manuscript are held at the University of Guelph archives (UG XZ1 MS A098001 and A098002); page numbers are taken from the second version of the text. A volume of the short stories was edited by Montgomery's son, E. Stuart Macdonald, and published in 1974 as *The Road to Yesterday*.

6 In her journal entry dated 27 January 1911, Montgomery wrote, "I have *never* drawn any of the characters in my books 'from life,' although I may have taken a quality here and an incident there." The suggestion that David and Margaret Macneill, who lived at the house that is now known as Green Gables, were the prototypes for Matthew and Marilla she found "absurd": she made Matthew shy and gave Marilla certain qualities "simply because I wished to have all the people around *Anne* as pointedly in contrast with her as possible [...] to furnish a background for *Anne*" (*SJ* II 38-39). If she is doing likewise with Jem and Walter, who is the "real" character? Who is the foil?

7 In *The Blythes Are Quoted*, Susan's opinion of Walter's lack of masculinity is finally made explicit instead of implicit. She continues to compare Walter to Jem, who is more "like a boy" (23), and advises Walter that "while writing poetry is a very good amusement for a woman, it is no real occupation for a man" (193). Following Walter's death, Susan admits that she regrets her criticisms of Walter and now treasures every scrap of Walter's scribblings.

8 Walter's inattention to Una's beauty has also been attributed to a possible secret love for Faith, his brother's fiancée. Although Walter's claim in childhood that he is fighting Dan Reese to defend Faith partially supports this interpretation, as does the mention — from Gertrude Oliver's perspective — that the adult Walter has written a "sequence of sonnets 'to Rosamund' — i.e. Faith Meredith" (*RI* 13), Epperly makes it clear that Montgomery intends to link Jem with Faith and Walter with Una: speaking of them as children, she argues that Faith is "the perfect female counterpart in spirit and (limited) vision for Jem Blythe" (100), while "Una's love for her mother makes her sound like Walter" (102). Further, Walter and Faith barely speak in *Rilla of Ingleside* and Faith is noticeably absent from most of the novel, making this possibility unlikely.

9 In *The Blythes Are Quoted*, the family reads Walter's poem "Interlude" and then speculates whether Walter ever kissed a girl. Faith Meredith claims that Walter once kissed Una but Rilla argues that the poem was written before this happened. It is at this moment that Susan regrets her criticism of Walter's poetry — at the revelation of an apparent act of proper masculinity that she believed Walter was lacking.

10 William Y.'s concern for Aunt Becky's salvation is only momentary. He immediately reminds himself that "she was a Penhallow. A Penhallow couldn't go anywhere but to the right place" (*ATW* 95). In *The Golden Road*, Cecily asks Beverley if he believes Mr. Campbell will go to heaven when he dies. "Of course he will," Beverley replies; "Isn't he a member of the church?" (155). In *Anne of Avonlea*, Jane Andrews is described as "a good girl, a member of the church, who tried conscientiously to live up to her profession [of schoolteacher] and believed everything she had been taught. But she never thought about heaven any more than she could help it" (105).

11 In *The Blythes Are Quoted*, Susan defends Walter's assumed Christian faith commitment after his death when Rilla avers that he really did believe in fairies. "But not in the olden gods at any time, Rilla. You can never convince me that Walter was a pagan. He went to church and Sunday-school every Sunday and liked it" (343), which suggests that perhaps Susan is now or has at some time been concerned about Walter's salvation. Following the reading of one of his poems, she turns right around and says with anger, "I do not often question the purposes of the Almighty. But I

should like to know why He makes a brain that can write things like that and then lets it be crushed to death" (345).

12 Montgomery presents a more explicit example of an unmasculine boy in "The Cheated Child," a short story from *The Blythes Are Quoted* that was published in *The Road to Yesterday* (page numbers from *RtY*). In it, Patrick Brewster yearns to find a home with people who love him following the death of his guardian, Uncle Stephen, who had "liked boys to be robust and aggressive — real 'he boys'" — everything that Patrick is not. His relatives, however, are more interested in his inheritance, and Patrick is unhappy at every turn. His male cousins are polite to him "because you have to be polite to girls" (203) and tell everyone at school that he is a sissy (200). Most significant in this story is the peculiar bond that exists between Patrick, ages nine to ten, and Walter Blythe, whose age is not made clear but who is at least twelve (age discrepancies throughout this text are abundant). Although Walter is never seen, he appears frequently in Patrick's imagination and is referred to almost incessantly, either by adults who call him "half-witted" (195) and "a sissy, and not over-brave in the bargain" (207) (an accusation that Patrick does not directly deny), or by Patrick himself, who has felt "a strange kinship [with Walter] the few times they had met. Walter was like himself: quiet and dreamy and sensitive" (186). The separation of Patrick from "other boys" is made explicit by a bus driver with a "certain soft spot in his heart for boys" (209) who "did not feel altogether easy about [Patrick]. There was something ... well, a little odd about him ... some difference the good man could not have explained, between him and other boys" (210). Throughout the story, there are three references to Patrick and Walter's "other world" and the things they do there, including Patrick's hope that they will someday find "A door that might — should — open into that other world" (209). Although the suggestion of a possible sexual component to their friendship is inappropriate given their ages, Patrick concludes at the end of the story that "he loved Walter with all his heart" (223).

13 Years after making "The Piper" a major element of *Rilla of Ingleside*, Montgomery finally succumbed to pressure from her fans to write it. Although the poem is much below her usual standards and has little literary value, it is nevertheless an important poem in light of the fanfare it caused within her fictional account of World War I. Moreover, just as Walter's "The Piper" was published after his death, Montgomery's "The Piper" appeared after hers: submitted to *Saturday Night* magazine three weeks before her death, it appeared posthumously on 2 May 1942. It is her final poem.

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Adolescence and the Trauma of Maternal Inheritance in L.M. Montgomery's ***Emily of New Moon***

• Kate Lawson •

Résumé: *Le roman* ***Émilie de la nouvelle lune*** *(1923) de Lucy Maud Montgomery est un roman d'apprentissage fort complexe, centré autour du difficile passage de l'enfance à l'adolescence de l'héroïne éponyme. Après la perte de son père, Émilie doit s'adapter à un nouveau contexte social, des plus conformistes. À l'univers répressif de ses tantes s'oppose le caractère ouvert et volontiers rebelle de son héritage maternel. L'issue du conflit, ambivalent et quelque peu empreint, dans son expression littéraire, de l'imagerie des romans gothiques, permettra à l'héroïne, du moins en apparence, de surmonter le traumatisme de la maturation sexuelle et d'assumer son identité.*

Summary: *L.M. Montgomery's* ***Emily of New Moon*** *(1923) is a Canadian Bildüngsroman which begins with the death of the heroine Emily's father, a death*

which precipitates Emily's entry into a female-dominated world of familial, social and sexual conformity. The paper first examines the overall structure of gender relations in the novel, and then explores the novel's overdetermined figuration of Emily's preadolescent body as it moves towards sexual maturity, in particular, Emily's body as inheriting a sexually rebellious maternal lineage which counteracts the repressive matriarchal power of aunts and family. In Emily's Gothicized and hallucinated "solution" to the dark and secret story of a rebellious woman's sexual excess, Emily seemingly solves the "riddle" of adult female sexuality and resolves the trauma of sexual maturity.

L. M. Montgomery's *Emily of New Moon* (1923) is a Canadian *Bildüngsroman* which traces the growth and development of the orphan heroine Emily after her beloved father dies and she is forced to make a place for herself in a female-dominated world of familial, social and sexual conformity. Tracing Emily's growth from ages eleven to thirteen, the novel thus begins with the traumatic loss of the protective paternal figure, representing it as a precursor to the burgeoning of adolescent sexuality and individuality. The constraints of social conformity then imposed on the adolescent girl are represented, as in many children's stories, as a specifically feminine form of repression.[1]

This paper first examines the overall structure of gender relations in the novel, principally Emily's relation with her tyrannical Aunt Elizabeth and with the series of weak and deficient male father-figures. Although these father-figures nurture Emily's formative growth as a writer, they do not figure in the other equally important cornerstone of Emily's psychic development, that is her growth into femininity. This growth into femininity requires an incorporation into Emily's personality of the hitherto unattractive elements of femininity represented by Emily's aunts. Secondly, the paper explores the novel's overdetermined figuration of Emily's *body* in arriving at sexual maturity, in particular Emily's body as inheriting a sexually rebellious maternal lineage which counteracts the repressive matriarchal power of aunts and family. In Emily's Gothicized and hallucinated "solution" to the dark and secret story of a rebellious woman's sexual excess, Emily solves the "riddle" of adult female sexuality and resolves the trauma of sexual maturity. However, the Gothic solution, and the fragmentation and disruption figured in this "solution," indicate the unresolved and unresolvable aspects of a maternal inheritance which forces itself on Emily's recalcitrant body.

Critics writing on *Emily of New Moon* have most often treated it, with reason, as Montgomery's *Künstlerroman*, the novel which records the artist's, and perhaps Montgomery's own growth as a writer, a growth which is hindered, or perhaps ultimately destroyed, by the patriarchal values which govern her society. Mary Rubio, for instance, argues that the *Emily* series "focuses on how a young woman who wants to become a writer learns to nego-

tiate with a patriarchal society which discourages female self-hood and individuality, denying her 'a room of her own'" (8). Similarly, Ian Menzies argues that Emily gives up her career "in favour of following the norms of her gender": "Montgomery is able to convey through Emily's failure, the unfathomable courage it must have taken for a young woman from Cavendish, Prince Edward Island, during the Victorian era, to stay true to her own quest" (60). Elizabeth Epperly titles her chapter on *Emily of New Moon*, "The Struggle for Voice," arguing that the various male characters whom Emily encounters, Father Cassidy, Mr. Carpenter and Dean Priest, "each challenge Emily's conception of herself as writer-heroine" (152). While this paper does not take issue with this major strand of Montgomery criticism, it attempts to look at gender relations in the novel not so much in the context of Emily's career as a writer as in the context of Emily's psychological development into adult womanhood, that is, at the novel as *Bildüngsroman* embodied within the *Künstlerroman*. Elizabeth Waterston suggests that all of Montgomery's novels are best seen as *Bildüngsroman*: they are portraits of adolescents "torn by mixed emotions of admiration, rivalry, dependence [and] hostility all operating at an unconscious level.... And adolescence, that time of intense dreaming, of romantic yearning and disturbing hostility, remains a part of every consciousness" (218-19). This paper specifically examines adolescence in the context of female inheritance: what does it means to mature into a woman given a troubling legacy of angry and rebellious female ancestors? Since Emily's writing is a cornerstone of her psychological development (particularly in her relationship to adult males), aspects of Emily's development as an artist cannot be ignored; however, they will be treated as integral to Montgomery's depiction of adolescent sexuality.

That the powers of social conformity enforced on the pre-adolescent and adolescent girl are feminine seems to be an unmistakable point in both this novel and in many works of children's fiction. Bruno Bettelheim argues, in *The Uses of Enchantment*, that fairy tale conventions are the product of deep psychological patterns:

> What blocks the oedipal girl's uninterrupted blissful existence with Father is an older, well-intentioned female (i.e. Mother). But since the little girl also wants very much to continue enjoying mother's loving care, there is also a benevolent female in the past or background of the fairy tale, whose happy memory is kept intact, although she has become inoperative.... In a girl's oedipal fantasy, the mother is split into two figures: the pre-oedipal wonderful good mother and the oedipal evil stepmother. (112, 114)

In simple terms, Emily's mother, Juliet Murray, is the benevolent but "inoperative" or lost preoedipal mother while her father, Douglas Starr — "so tender, so understanding, so wonderful!" (12) — dies at the novel's opening, or as Bettelheim describes the convention, is stricken with "failure" or "un-

fortunate ineffectuality." The girl is thus left under the control of the oedipal "evil stepmother" figure in the novel, Aunt Elizabeth.[2]

However, female power and control in *Emily of New Moon* have most often been treated by critics, paradoxically, as elements of a *patriarchal* power which at the same time act as a critique of that patriarchy. Mary Rubio begins this line of argument with her assertion that one of the "curious" and "subversive" (24) strategies used by Montgomery is her presentation of the "most overbearing authority figures in women's clothing" (24). Rather than being a "real" woman, Aunt Elizabeth is an example of "the authoritarian mannish types who mimic the male prerogative to rule" (24). Rubio concludes that "Montgomery can present what she considers objectionable authoritarian male characteristics with impunity because she disguises them in the female form" (24). Epperly cites this strategy approvingly; calling Aunt Elizabeth "a female-clad patriarch" (152), Epperly says Montgomery presents "patriarchs as women, thus making behaviour and attitudes that would have been acceptable in a man seem grotesque" (7). Similarly, Menzies refers to "the patriarchal Aunt Elizabeth" (60). Since these arguments rely on paradox — a woman may seem to be a woman but she is really acting as and representing a man — they are hard to refute, but also, arguably, difficult to support with textual evidence. In realist terms, Aunt Elizabeth *is* a woman who is the head of New Moon and who seeks to enforce a matriarchal structure of domesticity and "family values."[3] However much gender is a construct in the novel, it is clear that Elizabeth herself believes that the femininity she exemplifies is also enjoined upon Emily. In her view, girls should receive only an elementary education, should not learn to support themselves, and should lead impeccable if dull lives: "All we require of you is to be a good and contented child and to conduct yourself with becoming prudence and modesty." To Emily, "This sounded terribly hard" (61). The various male father-figures in the novel, on the other hand, are shown to be ineffectual, systematically weak or powerless, living marginal lives, and unable to assert traditional male prerogatives of power and rule.

One of the first lessons Emily learns is that "Elizabeth's boss of New Moon" (22). Elizabeth herself asserts this power immediately after Emily draws lots to go with her to New Moon farm: "No, don't argue," she says regarding Emily's cats, "You may as well learn first as last, Emily, that when *I* says a thing I mean it" (47). Her Cousin Jimmy concurs: "When she won't, she won't — Murray like" (47), eventually leaving the beleaguered Emily room only to assert: "Anyway, Aunt Elizabeth, you can't boss God" (80). With such nearly omnipotent power to contend with, characters who would nurture Emily must resort to subterfuge. When they stop in Charlottetown after the death of her father, her aunts go to buy her some decent clothes, leaving Cousin Jimmy to take care of her. His "method of looking after her was to take her to a restaurant down street and fill her up with ice-cream" (54). His reasoning is that there is "No use my getting anything for you that Aunt

Elizabeth can see.... But she can't see what is inside of you" (54). This observation fits well with Emily's entire relation to Aunt Elizabeth's power: only "inner" nourishment — what Aunt Elizabeth can't see — may be given her in contravention of Elizabeth's rule. Cousin Jimmy and Aunt Laura may only give things to Emily "on the sly" (133); Aunt Laura advises Emily: "don't let Elizabeth *see* you writing" (319). Aunt Elizabeth enforces her will in the visible and outward form which Emily must present, thus compelling Emily to wear "decent" dresses, buttoned boots, and the hated "baby-apron" (82). Even staring at wallpaper brings a rebuke from Aunt Elizabeth: "Don't do it again. It gives your face an unnatural expression" (57).

Although Aunt Elizabeth is the central figure of female authority in the novel, other women, such as Emily's father's housekeeper Ellen Greene, her Aunt Ruth, and her teacher Miss Brownell, are similarly domineering and latently menacing characters. Her friend Teddy's mother, Mrs. Kent, explicitly shares the aggressive tendencies of Aunt Elizabeth; jealous of Teddy's love of anyone or anything beside herself, she hates Emily, poisons his cats, and burns his drawings (290-91).

Set against these powerful and latently violent female figures are the adult males, who are nourishing of Emily's inner self and yet systematically shown to be weak or impaired or marginal. Emily's beloved father, Douglas Starr, is consumptive, racked by coughing and too weak to lift up Emily: "He's been dying by inches for the last five years," says Ellen Greene (9). After his death, the figure of the weak, ineffective but loving paternal male appears in a number of new guises. Cousin Jimmy is loving but "a bit simple" (23). Emily's beloved teacher, Mr. Carpenter, is a drunk and a failure: "He 'took to drink' and went to the dogs generally. And the upshot of it was that Francis Carpenter, who led his class in his first and second years at McGill, and for whom his teachers had predicted a great career, was a country schoolteacher at forty-five with no prospect of ever being anything else" (303). Father Cassidy is the only one of Emily's paternal mentors who is physically sound — "he looked just like a big nut — a big, brown, wholesome nut" (200) — yet as a Catholic priest he stands outside the pale of normal "manhood" for the strict Presbyterian Emily, who is "horribly frightened" (199) at the thought of meeting him. Finally, "Jarback" Priest, the most troubling of Emily's adult male acquaintances, is physically deformed: "he had a malformed shoulder and limped slightly" (275).

Yet these weakened, deformed or eccentric male characters are the ones who (with the exception of Dean Priest) systematically sustain Emily's "inner" life, the life which Aunt Elizabeth can neither see nor ultimately affect.[4] These men play a crucial role in Emily's budding life as an author, as well as providing emotional support in her daily struggles.

Douglas Starr, Emily's frail father, provides the model for all these loving and infirm paternal figures who follow. He acknowledges to Emily

that "From a worldly point of view I've certainly been a failure" (17), and sees in his daughter the talent he never had: "You have my gift — along with something I never had. You will succeed where I failed, Emily" (13). Douglas Starr, like so many of the men who are to follow in Emily's life, is a failure at everything except loving her.

Father Cassidy is the first person after the death of her father to provide her credible support for her poetry, telling her to "Keep on, — keep on writing poetry" (210). Although Elizabeth Epperly claims that "To many readers this [chapter] will be a chilling" encounter because "his patronizing is but a gentle prelude to the caressing contempt Dean himself will later show for Emily's 'pretty cobwebs'" (153), it seems clear that Father Cassidy's "patronizing" of her epic pretensions shifts as she recites one of her lyric poems, "Evening Dreams," to him: "After the first verse a change came over his big brown face, and he began patting his fingertips together" (209). Emily herself recognizes that "if he bantered her as he had done about her epic — she would know what *that* meant" (209-10). The narrator continues: "Of course, it *was* trash. Father Cassidy knew that well enough. All the same, for a child like this — and rhyme and rhythm were flawless — and there was one line — just one line — 'the light of faintly golden stars' — for the sake of that line Father Cassidy suddenly said, 'Keep on, — keep on writing poetry'" (210). As Emily is a child of twelve, it would hardly be plausible for her to write great poetry, let alone epic. Montgomery accepts the idea of an apprenticeship which Emily must serve; Emily herself, on returning to her poetry after her trip to Wyther Grange, learns to see the weakness of her immature verse: "When she went to the garret next morning and pulled out her precious little bundle of manuscripts to read them lovingly over she was amazed and rather grieved to find that they were not half so good as she had believed they were. Some were positively silly, she thought" (292-93). When she re-reads the poem "Evening Dreams" later in the novel, she "wondered how she could ever have thought it any good" (314). Father Cassidy takes account of her age, makes allowance for her immaturity, and still tells her to "Keep on." This is a great victory; only her father had shown such faith in her abilities before.

Mr. Carpenter is the other major figure who contributes to her writing career. The novel ends with his cheering words: "But go on — climb!" (350). Mr. Carpenter judges her poetry, not by the standards he would apply to any other juvenile writer, but by the more demanding standards of literary excellence. When he first takes over the school, Emily is puzzled by his behaviour:

> [She could not] understand why he made red pencil corrections all over her compositions and rated her for split infinitives and too lavish compositions and strode up and down the aisle and hurled objurgations at her ... and then told Rhonda Stuart and Nan Lee that their compositions were very pretty and gave them back without so much as a mark on them. Yet, in spite of it all, she liked him more and more as time went on. (307)

Mr. Carpenter has not won the position of "one of the gatekeepers of the literary establishment" (Epperly 154) through his own success in poetry or literature; he is a self-acknowledged failure. After his interview with Emily, he admits "This child has — what I have never had and would have made any sacrifice to have" (350). Neither successful nor talented, he is nevertheless an educated man who recognizes excellence when he finds it — in Ilse's elocution, in Perry's speeches, and in Teddy's drawing — and nurtures all of them to the best of his ability. Raging when he sees halfhearted effort, helping where he can, he acknowledges, for instance, that he knows little about art, but nevertheless assigns Teddy more art and less arithmetic in school, and procures "certain elementary text books on drawing which he gave him" (306). Mr. Carpenter does not discriminate on the basis of gender, but on the basis of talent and excellence, saving his harshest criticism for that which he loves best: literature, and Emily.

Cousin Jimmy is the most curious figure of paternal support in the novel. An unabashed disciple of poetry and of beauty, he nourishes Emily as both a poet and as the girl whom he loves. His gifts of "Jimmy books" for her poetry and ice-cream and doughnuts for her pleasure are the only luxuries allowed her at frugal New Moon. Equally important, Jimmy had that extraordinary talent which Douglas Starr did not possess, had the talent for which Mr. Carpenter would have sacrificed anything, and yet that talent was robbed from him, or perhaps better, deformed in him; as a result of being pushed down the well, he has become, like Douglas Starr and Mr. Carpenter, "a failure" (147), and worse than either of them, "a mental weakling" (147). "Cousin Jimmy's poetry was surprisingly good — at least in spots" (147), the narrator comments; other "spots," one assumes, are fatally weak. Although Cousin Jimmy provides paper for Emily to transcribe and preserve her verse, he himself only recites his poetry; thus, poignantly, his uneven verse will be lost forever. Cousin Jimmy, of all the adults in the novel, is the figure who most clearly represents male talent, even genius, but a genius tragically lost: "Emily, listening to him, felt vaguely that if it had not been for that unlucky push into the New Moon well, this queer little man beside her might have stood in the presence of kings" (148). Instead, he is reduced to a man who has even lost control of his own bank account, a man ruled by Aunt Elizabeth's iron law.

Dean Priest, with his deformed shoulder and hateful relatives, seems at first to be a man who continues this pattern of male weakness and inner nourishment of Emily. Partaking of the same physical weakness as Douglas Starr — he is "trembly" (275) after he pulls her out of danger at the shore — he is in fact a contemporary of her father and studied with him at Queen's Academy. Yet Dean Priest is not like the other adult males in the novel. Clever, well-educated, wealthy, he never admits to any failure, save that (eventually) of making Emily love him. Given his age, Emily naturally thinks of him as another paternal figure; the reader however knows what Dean means by his

thoughtful "I think I'll wait for you" (278), and his promise to teach her "love talk" for her novel writing (280). Dean Priest will not be a nurturing father-figure like Mr. Carpenter or Father Cassidy or Cousin Jimmy; rather he will be a jealous lover, jealous of her relationship with Teddy, but more particularly jealous of her devotion to her writing. Like Aunt Laura who provides a loving if ineffectual counterpoint to Aunt Elizabeth's female tyranny, Dean Priest is the strong and demanding male counterpoint to the weak and ineffectual father-figures who populate the novel.

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Emily's growing maturity thus takes place in a context of gender relations which posit a fairly straightforward figuration of weak but nurturing father-figures set against a tyrannical and forbidding stepmother. Although this pattern is complicated by figures such as Dean Priest and Aunt Laura, the most significant challenge to Emily's maturity is the nature of her maternal inheritance, an inheritance which necessitates not the *rejection* but the *incorporation* of "Murray"-ness into her personality. While the nurturing father-figures tend to lead her away from her troubling Murray inheritance in their encouragement of her writing, in themselves they only provide examples of failure and frustration. To mature and succeed, Emily will have to master the Murray legacy, a legacy which becomes more insistent as she matures. The Murray inheritance, seemingly embodied as a repressive power of conformity, is also a legacy of anger, resistance and defiance. Emily's maternal lineage comes to be represented as having two basic aspects: first is the rage which Aunt Elizabeth and other Murray ancestors exhibit and which Emily also experiences; second are the specific and increasingly insistent demands of an adult female sexuality which Emily experiences as a maternal affect.

Although Aunt Elizabeth's command over the externals in Emily's life is seemingly matched by her own commanding and prim exterior, that exterior in fact conceals an astonishing inner rage, a rage which complicates the figure of Aunt Elizabeth as an image of female self-discipline and conformity. Cousin Jimmy initially tells Emily the story of how Elizabeth pushed him down the well: "I made Elizabeth mad — forget what I said — 'twasn't *hard* to make her mad, you understand — and she made to give me a bang on the head. I saw it coming and stepped back to get out of the way — and down I went, head first" (69). Great-aunt Nancy is more direct; Emily records in her diary that Great-aunt Nancy "called [Elizabeth] a 'tyrant' one day and then she said 'Jimmy Murray was a very clever boy. Elizabeth Murray killed his intellect in her temper — and nothing has been done to her. If she'd killed his body, she would have been a murderess. The other was worse, if you ask me'" (261).[5]

Elizabeth's temper is shown at many points in the novel, and although it frequently dominates over Emily, it is on occasion matched and

bested by Emily's own rage, a rage which Emily cannot summon consciously but which comes in moments of psychic stress. For instance, when Emily becomes depressed after being deceived by her "friend" Rhonda Stuart, Aunt Elizabeth, able only to see Emily's external self and not her inner distress, decides that Emily's luxurious hair is the cause of her "languor" (109), and decrees that it must be cut off.[6] Emily, crying that her hair is her "one beauty," says despairingly, "I suppose you want to cut off my lashes too" (110). The narrator continues: "Aunt Elizabeth *did* distrust those long, upcurled fringes of Emily's, which were the inheritance from the girlish stepmother, and too un-Murray-like to be approved" (110). As she approaches Emily with the scissors clicking, Emily "felt her brows drawing together in an unaccustomed way — she felt an uprush as from unknown depths of some irresistible surge of energy." Speaking with unaccustomed authority, Emily pronounces: "Aunt Elizabeth ... *my hair is not going to be cut off*. Let me hear no more of this" (111). Astonishingly, Aunt Elizabeth, looking at "the transformed or possessed child before her" (111), is stricken with terror and relents. We learn that Emily's power comes from the magical "Murray look" in which she reincarnates her dead grandfather Archibald Murray.[7]

This combat between Aunt Elizabeth and Emily indicates one of the most powerful forces in the novel, the force of inheritance, of personality as determined not by conscious choice but as driven by unconscious patterns of behaviour related to the past rather than to the present. This force of inheritance links the story powerfully with the Gothic genre, for, as Chris Baldick notes, "the tyranny of the past," "a fearful sense of inheritance" (xix) is one of the most characteristic tropes of Gothic. In looking at the eyelashes of Emily which remind Elizabeth not of "proper" Murray eyelashes, but of her own stepmother,[8] Elizabeth is distrustful. Her "evil stepmother's" rage at Emily, exhibited in the clicking, malicious scissors, is in part a rage against the girl who incarnates *her own* stepmother, but who is then capable of being transfigured into the incarnation of her own tyrannical father, Emily's grandfather. For Emily, Elizabeth may be the "tyrant" of New Moon as great-aunt Nancy claims, but in her own psychic life Elizabeth is faced by the ambiguous figure of a niece who is at once the incarnation of the father's "tyranny" (60) and of the interloping stepmother. Thus Elizabeth, like Emily, inherits an inter-generational family drama which links her present fears, angers and obsessions firmly to the past.

Female rage in the novel does not begin with Aunt Elizabeth or her father, however; it has its prototype in two female ancestors of Emily.[9] The first is Mary Shipley Murray, Emily's great-great-grandmother who emigrated to Canada from the "Old Country." Bound for Quebec, and after a terrible sea-voyage, Mary Murray insists on being put ashore on Prince Edward Island "to feel solid ground under her for an hour or so" (74) when the ship stops to take on water. When the time comes to re-board the ship, Mary refuses, insisting: "Here I stay" (74), a declarative which becomes statement

of fact, and then is spitefully and blasphemously inscribed onto her tombstone by her husband after her death. The second is Elizabeth Burnley Murray, another great-great-grandmother who also emigrated to Prince Edward Island, but who had the opposite reaction to her new home. She was, in Cousin Jimmy's words, "homesick, Emily — scandalous homesick. For weeks after she came here she wouldn't take off her bonnet — just walked the floor in it, demanding to be taken home" (75). These two refusals — the refusal to leave and the refusal to stay — indicate a deep and furious ambivalence in Emily's maternal heritage. New Moon farm is both central to who Emily is — she *is* "Emily of New Moon" — and New Moon is an "alien, hostile world" (59), a land of exile from her paternal heritage. On her first night at New Moon, weeping in bed beside the "griffin"-like (59) Aunt Elizabeth, Emily thinks passionately: "She *must* go back — she couldn't stay here — she would never be happy here! But there wasn't any 'back' to go to — no home — no father —" (59). Like her Murray foremothers, Emily has a deeply traumatic relation to the place she is in, and to the place she has lost. The break with the paternal past is made permanent by the end of the novel when Aunt Elizabeth reads Emily's letters to her father, letters which formerly had "seemed to bring him so near" (97). After Aunt Elizabeth's trespass into that relationship, Emily finds that "The sense of reality — nearness — of close communion had gone" (325). The novel represents Emily's maturity as an enforced loss of the paternal which brings about the confrontation with a maternal inheritance figured both as the site of a profound loss and of profound rage. The extraordinary Gothic elements at the end of the novel emerge most clearly at the site of this confrontation.

The Gothic elements of *Emily of New Moon* have been most thoroughly investigated by Lorna Drew who argues that "female gothic" effects such as "an engagement with nature, a maimed male ... and alternative worlds manifested in dreams, fantasies and visions ... point towards the preoedipal mother whose presence links the heroine with the prelinguistic" (19).[10] Although the role of the preoedipal mother in the novel is arguably related to the Kristevan semiotic in Emily's writing, the mother also has an important role in the novel's representation of trauma, and more specifically the adolescent girl's experience of sexual maturity as in itself traumatic and linked to the burden of femininity represented in the maternal body. For this analysis, Nicholas Abraham's and Maria Torok's claims concerning the intersubjective nature of family trauma are particularly apposite.

The novel opens with the death of Emily's father, an event which readers might expect to be the chief trauma of the protagonist's life. Coming in from an exhilarating dance through the woods on a May evening — all the more exhilarating because she has been caged in the house by a cold winter and a wet spring — Emily is confronted by the unloving housekeeper, Ellen, who stops her on the threshold and says: "Do you know that your pa has only a week or two more to live?" (8) The shock of this blunt revelation —

"like a physical blow" (8) — stuns Emily; however, the death of the beloved father in the next chapter, while sad, is not overpowering. The resilient Emily, defiant and rebellious, preserves her identity in the face of the grim circle of her oppressive and repressive Murray family relations, who arrive after the death of her father. The "letters" which she writes to her dead father keep her identity intact in spite of her loss. The beloved but lost father figure thus retains an imaginative and emotional integrity for Emily, allowing her, as previously discussed, to discover other adult men who will perform this role in relation to her; what becomes problematic in the novel is the inheritance from her *mother*, a mother whose life has had an incalculable effect on her own but who died when she was four years of age and who is remembered only as a corpse "lying ... in a long, black box" (16). Emily's problematic relationship with her barely-remembered mother is reflective of Montgomery's own life; a journal entry from January 2, 1905, indicates her deep sense of ambivalence towards her own dead mother:

> This evening, reading over a packet of old letters, I came across a very old one written to my mother in her girlhood by a girl friend....
>
> It is dreadful to lose one's mother in childhood! ... How often, smarting under some injustice or writhing under some misunderstanding, have I sobbed to myself, 'Oh, if mother had *only* lived!'
>
> But quick on the heels comes an instinctive thought, 'But oh, if she were like Aunt Emily, or even like Aunt Annie, that would make it worse.' Even in childhood I realized *that* would have been for me a worse tragedy than her death. (I. 300)

The dead mother can be imagined as loving and understanding, or just as easily as distant and insensitive. What is clear in the novel is that Emily's "mother" is the product of just such an ambivalent fantasy.

Emily's mother was named Juliet, a name with inevitable dramatic resonance in the mind of the adolescent girl. Juliet's rebellion against her family's wishes in her love for Romeo is parallelled in the novel by Juliet Murray eloping with the poor Douglas Starr and thus being disowned by her "respectable" middle-class parents. When Emily goes to live at New Moon farm with her aunts Elizabeth and Laura they are at first fearful that Emily will "take after" her father — that is, will be consumptive. They soon put aside this worry, however, and instead closely monitor her behaviour for signs that she "takes after" her mother, that is, that her mother's sexually rebellious personality is emerging. Her aunts are fearful that history will repeat itself and that the scandal and loss of elopement will once again blight the family: Aunt Elizabeth "fears she can't trust me out of her sight because my mother eloped," says Emily (*Emily Climbs* 5). Emily's aunts read the story of their sister's rebellious marriage and death, not as a romantic story of two lovers finding a brief happiness, or even as a commonplace story

of domestic happiness followed by all-too-common early death, but rather as scandalous sexual disgrace.

The first description by the narrator of Emily's appearance, and the first gesture of her extended family upon meeting Emily is a reading of her body to discern her true lineage, her body being a marker of breeding and inheritance. While this reading is in one way a reflexive Puritan gesture — "What's bred in the bone will out in the flesh" — the novel's stress on actual *physical* inheritance and the life of the body makes *Emily of New Moon* a rather daring novel of adolescent sexuality for the 1920s.[11] The narrator comments in the opening chapter that Emily's "smile began at the corners of her lips and spread over her face in a slow, subtle, very wonderful way, as Douglas Starr often thought. It was her dead mother's smile" (5). Similarly, on first meeting Emily, her aunts and uncles determine that she has "her grandmother's hair and eyes ... old George Byrd's nose ... her father's forehead [and] ... her mother's smile ... [and] long lashes" (30-31). Emily reacts with characteristic defiance: "'You make me feel as if I were made up of scraps and patches!' she burst out indignantly" (31). Yet as the novel progresses, Emily's body continues to reveal her lineage, most notably in the magical "Murray look" of command when she reincarnates her dead grandfather Archibald Murray. Emily learns to take this diverse inheritance humorously as time goes on. When she first meets Dean Priest, he begins the typical anatomy of her parts. She cuts him short with her recitation:

> ... it's only my eyelashes and smile that are like Mother's. But I've got Father's forehead, and Grandma Starr's hair and eyes, and Great-Uncle George's nose, and Aunt Nancy's hands, and Cousin Susan's elbows, and great-great-grandmother Murray's ankles, and Grandfather Murray's eyebrows. (281)

As Emily matures, the focus of her aunts' comments shifts from the *heterogeneity* of Emily's familial inheritance to the *singularity* of the maternal inheritance — from her mother Juliet and her grandmothers. Her inherited maternal attributes, conspicuous in her eyes, smile and ankles, are not simple characteristics, but understood by all around her as *expressive* attributes — sexually expressive in a manner wholly unconscious to and uncontrollable by Emily. Emily's aunts read her sexually maturing body as evidence of the same potential for sexual passion which led her mother Juliet Murray to elope, and they institute a policy of rigid control over her movements and her dress. For example, they insist that she go to school dressed in an infantile "baby-apron" and only grudgingly allow her to visit Teddy Kent — her later love interest — after Dr. Burnley orders the aunts to let go.

In the psychoanalytic view of trauma put forward by Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, the child inherits the traumas and repressions of a maternal past:

> Every child's emergence as an individual is distinctive, constituted by repressions of uniquely charged pieces-of-the-mother, each bearing affects specifically related to the singular circumstances and psychic traumas of the mother's life. Moreover, since every mother is also the child of another mother, she must herself be understood as always already carrying the contents of another's unconscious. (Rashkin 18)

Unlike Freud and most psychoanalytic critics who insist on the formative and universal role of the oedipus complex and castration in the development of human sexual identity and of trauma, Abraham and Torok see the processes of psychic maturation and trauma formation as individually determined. Sidestepping general arguments which distinguish the role of the preoedipal from the oedipal mother (such as Kristeva's or Bettelheim's), Abraham and Torok argue that some elaborations[12] of the oedipus complex in fact lead "to both theoretical and practical impasses":

> To take myths and fantasies literally is to grant them excessive dignity at the expense of metapsychology. To turn a blind eye to the contingency of fantasies or, worse, to claim to formalize them in the mode of descriptive structuralism, is to fail to recognize their true mainspring: the specific tension that arises between the Envelope [the ego] and the Kernel [the unconscious]. (Abraham and Torok 94-95)

Taking account of contingencies, Abraham and Torok suggest that the crucial maternal role is not programmatic; the individual begins as "an undivided entity" which is "gradually defined by a constant process of differentiation or 'division' from a more primary union: the mother" (Rashkin 16). In this process, the accidents of history and experience — the mother's as well as the child's — ensure that each child's individuation is unique; it is in this sense that Abraham and Torok insist that a child bears "affects specifically related to the *singular* circumstances and psychic traumas of the mother's life."

In studying a literary text, the tools of analysis may then be deployed, as Esther Rashkin says, "to identify visible elements of selected narratives as symptoms or 'symbols' that point to unspeakable family dramas cryptically inscribed within them" (5). While the narrative of Juliet Murray's elopement is not kept secret from Emily, the *reason* for Juliet's runaway marriage is an "unspeakable family drama" in the sense that adolescent female sexuality in itself *is* a scandal in a family where puritan sexuality — embodied in the maiden aunts Elizabeth and Laura — provide the norm for female behaviour. Like much adolescent fiction,[13] sexuality is a secret which the protagonist is enjoined not to discover, but to which the protagonist's body and unconscious mind give forcible witness.

Thus, Emily's maternal inheritance will speak. Both of her male friends, Teddy and Perry, are captivated by her reincarnation of her mother's

smile: "She smiled her slow, blossoming smile at Perry and thereby reduced him to helpless bondage" (157); the "soft purple-grey eyes and ... smile made [Teddy] think all sorts of wonderful things [he] couldn't put into words" (198). Old Jock Kelly offends Emily when he tells her that she should be married soon before her "come-hither eyes" do too much "mischief" (243) with men. Her great-aunt Nancy instructs her to display her ankles to advantage, and confirms that she will be able to attract men if she "learns to use [her] eyes and hands and feet properly" (251).

Like many adolescents, Emily finds the sexual precocity of her body humiliating and embarrassing, and tries simply to deny any such effect. Yet the anxieties attached to these uncontrollably expressive sexual marks and their relation to her maternal inheritance dominate Emily's unconscious. In particular, Emily's sexual anxieties are given shape in the life of the other woman in the novel whose body is similarly expressive — the mother of Emily's friend Ilse Burnley, the woman who, in Abraham and Torok's term, incarnates the phantasmic maternal body. Beatrice Burnley was marked by "a little birthmark over her left eye-brow — just like a tiny red heart" which led her to be called "the Ace of Hearts" (266). The story of Ilse's mother, and in particular Emily's Gothicized hallucination of her death, becomes the reservoir into which Emily's anxieties concerning sexual maturity and the relation to the maternal are displaced.

Abraham and Torok, in *The Shell and the Kernel*, argue that a phantom is a symbolization created by trauma, a symbolization which allows the subject to continue to function, but also creates within that functioning a "configuration of incoherence, discontinuity, disruption and disintegration" (Rand 6). What is particularly apposite in Torok and Abraham's conception of the phantom to the Gothic effects in the novel is that although the phantom fills a "gap" in an individual psyche, the *production* of that phantom is the result of an intersubjective and inter-generational process: "what haunts are not the dead, but the gaps left within us by the secrets of others" (171) — particularly the maternal other. Maternal "inheritance" in the novel is fraught with secrecy, repression and aggression, leading Emily to hallucinate a phantasmic maternal body, a body which will "solve" the riddle of female sexuality, and open the crypt[14] of the maternal secret.

Emily's initial fascination with Ilse's mother is initiated by the secrecy surrounding her story. Emily overhears her aunts Elizabeth and Laura referring to Beatrice Burnley on many occasions, but they stop whenever they realize that Emily is within earshot. The overpowering desire to find out what happened to Beatrice Burnley is finally satiated by the re-telling of the story by Emily's disreputable great-aunt Nancy, a woman who revels in scandal and bitterness. As Aunt Nancy begins telling the story, Emily's excitement is palpable: "Her finger tips were growing cold as they always did in excitement, her eyes turning black. She felt that she was on the verge of

solving the mystery that had so long worried and puzzled her" (266). Emily learns that Beatrice Mitchell married Dr. Burnley when she was eighteen and he thirty-five. They had one child, Ilse, and when Ilse was still an infant Beatrice was visited by her cousin and childhood companion Leo. Beatrice Burnley went to the shore one night, ostensibly to say farewell to Leo, a sailor, but she never returned home to her husband and daughter. Leo's ship was subsequently lost, and all assume that the eloping couple drowned together — a fitting end for an adulterer and her conspirator.

Emily's reaction upon hearing this story is extreme: her adolescent inquisitiveness into the mysteries of adulthood — "the mystery that had so long worried and puzzled her" — has been answered by a repugnant sexual story, a story which she calls "strange, cruel, heartless" (269). Presumably the reason for her great distress is that Beatrice Burnley's story is an ugly inversion of the hitherto, for Emily, romantic narrative of Emily's eloping mother. What power could lead a nineteen year-old girl to run away with a man, she must wonder, and is my body already giving evidence of what that uncontrollable power might be? Emily cannot believe that the story is true, and yet everything around her confirms its truth — the misogyny of Ilse's father, the missing gravestone in the churchyard, Ilse's ignorance of her mother's death, and most importantly her own growing awareness of the powers of sexual attraction. The ugly story makes Emily "afraid she could never be happy again — so intense was her reaction to her first revelation of the world's sin and sorrow" (270). The novel thus concentrates its representation of the trauma of adolescent sexuality in the maternal figure of Beatrice Burnley, the woman whose story unconsciously reveals to Emily that the maternal inheritance is constituted by both an abandonment of the child and by an uncontrollable sexual passion which may result in vice and unhappiness.[15] At the same time, Emily represses her awareness of the pleasure which must be inherent in this uncontrollable passion.

These conflicting impulses lead to the novel's most striking scene of hallucination and Gothic effect. Returning from Aunt Nancy's to New Moon with her secret knowledge of Beatrice Burnley, Emily falls ill.[16] Delirious with a high fever, Emily "sees" the woman with "the ace of hearts on her forehead" dancing over the fields at night, a scene which recalls Emily's joyful outdoor dance which opened the novel. The hallucinating Emily calls out: "she is coming so gladly — she is singing — she is thinking of her baby — oh, keep her back — keep her back — she doesn't see the well — it's so dark she doesn't see it — oh, she's gone into it — she's gone into it!" (333). The child's fantasized blissful narrative of the mother's desired return to her baby is traumatically interrupted by the mother's loss, her incomprehensible refusal to return and satisfy the child's desire. The mother falls into a well, which becomes for the child an abyss of longing from which there will be no return, leaving the child to mourn her loss.

In the midst of her high fever, Emily demands of her sweet Aunt Laura that she go and "get her out" (333), retrieve the maternal body. Although the loving Aunt Laura promises she will, Emily knows that Laura is lying, and so turns to her cruel but severely honest Aunt Elizabeth: "I know *you'll* keep your word.... You are very hard — but *you* never lie" (334). Aunt Laura is horrified by Elizabeth's promise to Emily: "it will open up all the old scandal again," she says (335). Nevertheless Aunt Elizabeth orders the old well opened and searched; the body of Beatrice Burnley is found, and the "real fate of the loving, laughing young wife" is revealed (336). "Truth lies at the bottom of a well," as the proverb says;[17] or as "simple" Cousin Jimmy puts it, "There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed" (335).

The story of Beatrice Burnley thus turns out to be in fact a story identical with, not the inverse of, the story of Juliet Murray — a common enough tale of bourgeois romantic marriage followed by the tragedy of early death. In the magical mode of adolescent fiction, the discovery by the heroine of the literal pitfalls of adult female sexuality are encrypted again as soon as they are discovered, and the story of maternal abandonment and of rebellious sexuality is normalized into a tale of domestic melodrama. Thus, when the story of Beatrice Burnley is re-told to Emily upon her recovery, it is "stripped ... forever of the taint and innuendo" (338) of a sordid feminine sexuality.

The intrusion of the phantom and the momentary opening of the crypt of the maternal secret open Emily to the world of adult experience. At the end of the novel, she has left childhood behind and now has "great grey shadowy eyes that had looked into death and read the riddle of a buried thing, and henceforth would hold in them some haunting, elusive remembrance of the world beyond the veil" (341). The veil is a metaphor used throughout the novel to describe the thin line which separates the world of the familiar, of "reality," from the "other" world of unknown and unconscious experience. At the opening of the novel when Emily was dancing with her imaginary friend, the Wind Woman, the "other world" was a place of natural beauty and goodness. The narrator says that Emily had always experienced herself as being "very, very near to a world of wonderful beauty. Between it and herself hung only a thin curtain; she could never draw the curtain aside — but sometimes, just for a moment, a wind fluttered it and then it was if she caught a glimpse of the enchanting realm beyond" (7). Emily calls these moments of Wordsworthian revelation of perfect beauty, "the flash" (7). It is on the return home from this otherworldly revelation that Emily hears that her father is to die. Thus when her father tells her that he understands death as the crossing of a threshold — "in death you open and shut a door" (18) — Emily, dismayed by the solidity of the door metaphor, refigures death as a swaying curtain, and recalling the "other" world of imaginative freedom and beauty, imagines her dead father slipping "into that world of which the flash had given her glimpses. He would be there in its beauty — never very far away from her" (19). The book's initial chapters thus

set a pattern of experience where Emily's movements towards real or imaginative freedom are checked by trauma, but from which she recuperates by an imaginative re-figuring of the traumatic experience into transcendent terms which are familiar and comforting. This fictional re-figuring has actual results for Emily's psychic wholeness. By placing her father "just beyond that wavering curtain" (19) rather than behind a closed door, she is able in a meaningful way to write the letters to her father which continue her sense of close spiritual connection to him.

The novel ends with a similar "trick." The full riddle of adult female sexuality, of a traumatic maternal inheritance, is grasped by Emily: the adult woman may abandon her maternal role and fall into the abyss of overwhelming sexual passion. While the story of the fall into the well, from the point of view of the child, is a narrative of maternal abandonment and childhood rage, from the point of view of the adolescent girl, the "fall" suggests the dark secret of sinful sexual knowledge. This "secret" is then re-"veiled" as the forces of repression re-read the "fall" into womanhood as a normalizing "solution" to a scandalous tale of female sexuality, so that the "real" maternal body, although recovered, is simply given a decent burial in the family plot in the churchyard. The crypt of the unspeakable family drama of female sexuality is once again sealed.

However, the well in which Beatrice Burnley meets her death is overdetermined in its context in the novel. While symbolic of the secrets of female sexuality, childhood loss and maternal abandonment, the well also bears an important relationship to the novel's continuing representation of female rage and familial aggression. As Ian Menzies notes, "a ninety-foot-deep hand-dug well adjacent to the sea ... is an unlikely feature to exist outside of fiction" and so must have a "true purpose as a literary device" (56). The narrator herself notes that "a very deep well ... was considered a curious thing in that low-lying land near pond and sea" (153). This "curious" feature of the landscape figures in the story on two occasions prior to Emily's hallucination. First is its connection to female aggression in the story of Cousin Jimmy being pushed down the New Moon well. Second is the story of domestic rage in the story of the Lee brothers who dig the fatal well together but then "quarrelled over some trivial difference of opinion as to what kind of hood should be put over it; and in the heat of his anger Silas struck his brother Thomas on the head with a hammer and killed him" (153-54). Both occasions are thus enmeshments of familial aggression and rage. As Dr. Burnley acknowledges, these stories, combined with Emily's anxiety over the "secret" of Beatrice Burnley's death, make her hallucination explicable:

> 'It can be explained rationally enough perhaps. Emily has evidently been told about Beatrice and worried over it — her repeated "she couldn't have done it" shows that. And the tales of the old Lee well naturally made a deep impression on the mind of a sensitive child keenly alive to

dramatic values. In her delirium she mixed this all up with the well-known fact of Jimmy's tumble into New Moon well — and the rest was coincidence.' (337)

Yet Dr. Burnley's rational explanation is challenged by Aunt Elizabeth, who solidly attributes Emily's vision to a maternally inherited insight into hidden human relationships: "Our stepmother's mother was a Highland Scotchwoman. They said she had the second sight.... I never believed in it — before" (337).

Thus *Emily of New Moon* both speaks to adolescent sexual curiosity, and announces and dramatizes female rage. Although Emily's paternal legacy is initially nurturing and supportive, it is ultimately a legacy of failure, and a legacy which cannot address the growing sexual anxieties of the adolescent Emily. Emily must thus confront her difficult maternal inheritance, an inheritance figured in her female ancestors, her aunts and most importantly her mother. Although the secret knowledge represented by Juliet Murray's and Beatrice Burnley's elopements is successfully repressed and integrated into the life of the mature Emily through the mastery of certain Gothic effects, the novel does plumb the depths of both female rage and female sexual passion. While the novel ends with a normalizing view of adulthood which removes the "taint and innuendo" of female sexual knowledge, the crypt of the maternal body is briefly opened, and the complexity of both female desire and female rebelliousness is revealed.

Notes

1 Wicked stepmother figures abound in a variety of fairy-tales including "Hansel and Gretel," "Rapunzel" and "Snow-White." Similarly, Sara Crewe, in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Little Princess*, loses her beloved father and is set to work by the malicious maternal replacement, Miss Minchin. Like Emily's Aunt Laura, Miss Minchin's sister, Miss Amelia, is a more loving — but weak and ineffective — maternal figure in the novel. The death of Matthew at the end of *Anne of Green Gables* and the death of the protective uncle Reed before the opening of *Jane Eyre* are other examples of the traumatic loss of the father-figure, leaving the pre-adolescent girl in the hands of less than fully sympathetic "stepmother" figures.

In claiming that Emily's Aunt Elizabeth is a kind of "evil stepmother" character, I disagree at least partially with Lorna Drew who argues that the female characters in the novel are evidence of "female dissatisfaction": the "Emily trilogy is full of women whose sheer bloody-mindedness speaks their unhappiness" (Drew, 26). Characters such as Aunt Elizabeth, Ruth Dutton, and Miss Brownell are certainly "bloody-minded" but also commanding women who exert with pleasure considerable power over their small worlds. However, I do agree with her suggestion that patriarchy seems to be a much weakened force in this novel; Drew notes the many ill, maimed, and "feminized" male characters.

L.M. Montgomery's relation with her grandmother Lucy Macneill may be the source for some of this antagonism to quasi-stepmother figures, and her absent

father — remarried and living in Saskatchewan — the model for the lost but loved father. Both of the grandparents with whom she lived as a child seem to have been stern and disapproving. For example, after an enjoyable school concert, the sixteen year-old Lucy Maud goes home to face their displeasure. Her journal entry of July 1, 1890 records: "I am really sorry it is over for we had lots of fun getting it up. I have enjoyed it all, although, as usual, it was somewhat embittered for me by the fact that grandpa and grandma did not approve of it — why I cannot say. It just seems that they never do approve of anything which means the assembling of young folks together" (I. 21-22).

2 Elizabeth Waterston writes: "The heroines of L.M. Montgomery have no mothers. They do have aunts and grandmothers (who can be safely hated). Indeed they usually have a range of aunts, some restrictive, some permissive. The adolescent reader can discriminate ambivalent feelings by loving one aunt (mother-substitute), while hating another" (218).

For a contrary view on absent mothers in fairy tales, see Marina Warner who argues: "The experiences fairy stories recount are remembered, lived experiences of women, not fairytale concoctions from the depths of the psyche; they are rooted in the social, legal and economic history of marriage and the family, and they have all the stark actuality of the real" (287).

3 By "realist" I mean conforming to a mode of literal rather than figurative representation; cf. M.H. Abrams: "The typical realist sets out to write a fiction which will give the illusion that it reflects life and the social world as it seems to the common reader" (152). On the subject of "family values," Lorna Drew, picking up on the motif of the island and its relation to Emily's writing, argues that Emily "may write only on the island, performing the important ideological task of marketing both family values and place" (23).

4 Here I disagree with both Epperly and Judith Miller. Epperly writes: "On the surface of it, the males, as Judith Miller says, 'seem to encourage writing' (163), but the underlying and encoded messages about women's place in the male literary establishment eventually make their quality of support suspect (not Cousin Jimmy's or her father's, but then Cousin Jimmy is 'simple,' and her father is dead)" (152). Epperly discusses the roles of Father Cassidy (153), Mr. Carpenter (154) and Dean Priest (155-56) in some detail.

5 We never learn explicitly the shape or form of Elizabeth's remorse for this deed. However, the scene in which Elizabeth tells Emily to kneel to ask Miss Brownell's forgiveness, but then is checked by Jimmy, is suggestive. After Jimmy says, "A human being should not kneel to any one but God," "A sudden strange change came over Elizabeth Murray's proud, angry face. She stood very still, looking at Cousin Jimmy — stood so long Miss Brownell made a motion of petulant impatience" (177). Given what we know about their relation, it is fitting that Cousin Jimmy speaks with authority to Elizabeth on matters of repentance and forgiveness.

6 The threat to cut Emily's hair recalls the act of the witch who does in fact cut Rapunzel's hair, hair which has been both an image of and her means to achieve sexual freedom.

7 Archibald Murray was, in fact, a patriarchal tyrant: "the handsome, intolerant, autocratic old man ... ruled his family with a rod of iron all his life and made existence miserable at New Moon with his petulant tyranny of the five years of invalidism that had closed his career" (60).

8 Elizabeth's "girlish stepmother" is Emily's mother's mother; the stepmother married Elizabeth's (one assumes elderly) father after her own mother died.

9 These female ancestors are based on Montgomery's own. See Montgomery's *The Alpine Path* 12, 14.

10 Ellen Moers coins the term "female Gothic" in her book *Literary Women*; it receives further adumbration by Gilbert and Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*. Drew's argument employs Julia Kristeva's idea of poetic language being inflected by the semiotic, a state associated with the preoedipal mother. The semiotic is replaced by the (masculine) symbolic order when the infant learns language. As John Lechte argues, for Kristeva, "the semiotic ... is bound up with the body as jouissance" (128) so that for Drew, Emily's "dreams, fantasies and visions" are associated with "the dimension of poetic language [which] corresponds to an experience with the mother" (Lechte, 157).

11 Gabriella Ahmansson analyses Anne's desire to alter her body — her hair, her freckles, etc. — in *Anne of Green Gables* (88); the focus on Emily's body is thus arguably evidence of a characteristic interest of Montgomery. Ahmansson also provides an overview of L.M. Montgomery's work as belonging to a tradition of Canadian fiction strongly influenced by the Puritan ethic (47-48).

12 Nancy Chodorow's argument in *The Reproduction of Mothering* would be an example of what Abraham and Torok view as an overly deterministic system. Concentrating on the preoedipal phase, Chodorow argues that because girls are mothered by someone of the same gender, girls, universally, develop more fluid ego-boundaries than boys.

13 For example, Mary's maturing body is transformed by a power identified as "Magic" in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, a "magic" clearly connected to both the garden's suggestively burgeoning growth and to the story of Colin's mother. Psychoanalytic readings of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* or L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (or the film *The Wizard of Oz*) would similarly suggest that the development of the heroine's adolescent body is a sub-text of those works.

14 Abraham and Torok frequently use the metaphor of the crypt to describe the mechanism of repression and the aim of analysis. In analysis patients "disinter" the "crypt" of family secrets by introjecting an unspoken secret through an appropriation of the traumatic event which brings it into full consciousness. In *Emily of New Moon* the opening of the crypt is literal, not metaphoric.

15 Drew's argument concerning Beatrice Burnley's role in the Gothic plot is difficult to follow. Drew claims that she "is, of course, an example of the fate in store for women who are rather *too* feminine; her excessive jealousy places her beyond the patriarchal pale. In reviving her tarnished reputation, Emily makes a statement for the presence of a less repressed version of femininity than that manifested in the women around her" (26-27). While this description seems apt for Teddy Kent's mother, who does suffer from "excessive jealousy" and who has her traumatic guilt cleansed by Emily in *Emily's Quest*, it seems hard to argue that Beatrice Burnley is either "*too* feminine" or that she suffers from jealousy at all. While Emily's hallucination of the true story of Beatrice Burnley could be said to redeem "her tarnished reputation," this paper argues that the "solution" offered by Emily's hallucination is, in fact, only another form of repression.

16 In a journal entry from January 7, 1910, Montgomery records some of her earliest memories, including the story of her bout with typhoid fever. She recalls a lengthy inability to recognize Lucy Macneill as her grandmother. In her feverish delirium she believes that "this tall thin woman by the bed" (370) cannot be her grandmother, but when she finally recovers "it simply dawned on me that it really was grandmother.... I remember stroking her face continually and saying in amazement and delight, "Why, you are *not* Mrs. Murphy after all — you are grandma" (I. 370). The halluci-

nated scene in *Emily of New Moon*, though more Gothic in its overtones, similarly involves questions of recognition, identity and truth.

17 Proverbial, origin in Democritus.

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Le problème du corpus de textes littéraires en classe de langue première. Entrevues avec 32 agents des champs littéraire et scolaire en regard des idées de littérature et de littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse

• *Jean-François Boutin* •

Summary: *In this second of a three-part study on the specificity of children's literature, Jean-François Boutin analyzes the results of a survey on the definition of children's literature. He has corresponded with several French, Belgian and Québécois writers, publishers and scholars. It seems that though most consider children's literature as "literature" or as partially literary by nature, some specialists still view books written for children as some sort of "sub-literature."*

Résumé: *Dans cette seconde partie d'une étude sur la spécificité de la littérature pour la jeunesse, Jean-François Boutin nous fait part d'une enquête menée auprès d'auteurs, d'éditeurs et de spécialistes français, belges et québécois. Il semblerait que, même si pour la majorité des praticiens cette production est, de plain pied ou en partie, littéraire en soi, il n'en reste pas moins que certains soutiennent toujours que la littérature pour la jeunesse ne relève que du champ de la paralittérature.*

> Fiction, évidemment.
>
> (Robert Cormier, *L'Éclipse*, 1989, p. 160)

Rappel

La didactique du français langue première — DFL_1 — (Simard, 1997) a été présentée, dans un premier article[1], comme une jeune discipline qui cherche à consolider son épistémè[2] et à améliorer les pratiques pédagogiques langagières. Au sein de la DFL_1 existent différents domaines, dont celui qui

nous concerne davantage, la didactique de la littérature (Reuter, 1987) ou, comme on tend de plus en plus à la dénommer, la didactique de la lecture littéraire (Dufays et Gemenne, 1995). Pour notre part, nous préférons parler d'une didactique de la littérature dans le sens d'une lecture/écriture littéraire.

Les spécialistes du domaine poursuivent actuellement une démarche de redéfinition de ses assises, tant sur le plan des pratiques littéraires des élèves (Legros, 1992 et 1996) que sur celui des valeurs en jeu dans cet enseignement et des idéologies qui s'y affrontent (Yerlès et Lits, 1992). Ces personnes tentent de repenser la problématique générale de l'enseignement de la littérature en classe de langue première, de l'ordre préscolaire/primaire aux ordres postsecondaires.

L'une des dimensions fondamentales de cette problématique concerne la constitution du corpus des textes littéraires à présenter aux apprenants. L'atteinte d'un consensus sur cette question se heurte à plusieurs écueils, dont la manière de concevoir la *littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse* par rapport à la *littérature* dite générale.

Nous avons voulu clarifier ce qui fonde ces deux idées. Pour ce faire, nous avons analysé, dans un pemier temps, de nombreux écrits provenant aussi bien des spécialistes de la littérature que des didacticiens de la littérature, étude qui nous a révélé que les rapports entre la *littérature* et la *littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse* étaient envisagés de façon plutôt ambivalente et nullement consensuelle. Dans un deuxième temps, nous avons interviewé plusieurs personnes œuvrant dans les domaines de la littérature et de l'enseignement littéraire. Une série d'entrevues en Europe et au Québec a donc eu lieu à l'automne 1996 et au printemps 1997.

Nous avons réalisé ces entretiens afin de mieux connaître les conceptions épistémologiques[3] que se forgent divers agents à propos des rapports entre la littérature générale et la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse, dans la perspective de l'enseignement littéraire. Quelle(s) littérature(s) enseigner? La littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse *puis* la littérature générale? La littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse *et* la littérature générale? La littérature, tout court? En classe de langue première, faut-il aborder la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse comme une littérature spécifiquement vouée aux besoins d'un sujet lecteur défini, enfant ou adolescent (Soriano, 1975; Madore, 1994; Gervais, 1996)? Ou, au contraire, déclarer ce concept inopérant en soutenant qu'il n'y a qu'une seule et unique littérature (Goldenstein, 1990; Poslaniec, 1992)? De ce débat devrait se dégager une ligne maîtresse pour que nous pourrions alors défendre ...

1 Description des entrevues avec les spécialistes, créateurs, professeurs et éditeurs de la littérature et de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse

Pour effectuer notre série d'entrevues auprès des agents des champs littéraire et scolaire, nous avons suivi certains principes méthodologiques, qui sont expliqués dans les lignes qui suivent. Nous commenterons ainsi la préparation et la réalisation des entretiens, de même que les modalités choisies pour traiter leur contenu.

1.1 La série d'entrevues (cueillette des informations)

Pour affiner l'analyse des idées de *littérature* et de *littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse*, nous avons choisi d'étendre notre étude à la francophonie afin d'obtenir les avis d'agents de divers milieux. Ainsi, nous avons entrepris un voyage de recherche aux mois d'août, septembre et octobre 1996, avec des arrêts à Louvain-la-Neuve et Namur (Belgique), Strasbourg, Nice, Rennes et Paris (France), afin de rencontrer différents spécialistes, les interroger et recueillir leurs propos, idées et opinions en regard de notre problème de recherche. Au printemps 1997, nous avons effectué une seconde série d'entrevues au Québec, auprès d'agents issus des mêmes milieux.

Le tableau 1 présente la liste de toutes les personnes rencontrées en Europe et au Québec. Au total, trente-deux agents ont accepté de nous recevoir en entrevue, à la suite d'une demande écrite que nous leur avions envoyée. Nous avons eu la chance de nous entretenir avec huit Belges, seize Français et huit Québecois. Nous tenons à les remercier toutes et tous de leur précieuse collaboration.

Plusieurs de ces personnes œuvrent dans plus d'un domaine; par exemple, un spécialiste de la littérature de jeunesse peut aussi endosser la fonction d'écrivain. Dans l'ensemble, on peut établir quatre grandes sphères d'activités où se regroupent les gens qui ont participé à notre enquête. Tout d'abord, la sphère de la **création** regroupe treize écrivains et illustrateurs. L'**édition**, pour sa part, est constituée de quatre éditeurs, dont trois qui se vouent exclusivement à l'édition pour l'enfance et la jeunesse. On retrouve ensuite douze interviewés dans la troisième sphère d'activités, celle de l'**enseignement et de la promotion de la *littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse***. Enfin, neuf personnes se consacrent à la **recherche et à l'enseignement littéraire**, dont plusieurs didacticiens du français et de la littérature. Il faut souligner le déséquilibre marqué, en termes de représentation, entre les différentes sphères, notamment dans le secteur de l'édition (quatre éditeurs), ainsi que la prédominance relative de la sphère de la création ainsi que celle de l'enseignement et de la promotion de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse, avec respectivement treize et douze représentants.

Tableau 1
Liste des agents rencontrés en Europe (1996) et au Québec (1997)
(par ordre chronologique des entrevues)

		*Sphères d'activités**
Belgique		
Pierre Massart	Professeur de littérature	D
Jean-Louis Tilleuil	Chercheur en littérature	D
Marie-Anne Piret	Chercheure en littérature	D
Jean-Louis Dufays	Didacticien du français (littérature)	D
Nicole Nachtergeale	Rédactrice en chef (*Alice*)/critique d'art	C
Daniel Fano	Rédacteur en chef (*Alice*)/critique littéraire	C
Pierre Yerlès	Didacticien du français	D
Georges Legros	Didacticien du français (littérature)	D
France		
Claude Lapointe	Illustrateur/professeur d'illustration	A
Jean-Louis Maunoury	Écrivain	A
Susie Morgenstern	Écrivaine	A
Jacques Clément	Éditeur (Éditions Ouest-France)	B
Yak Rivais	Écrivain	A
Rolande Causse	Écrivaine/spécialiste de la littérature de jeunesse	A,C
Jean Perrot	Professeur/spécialiste de la littérature de jeunesse	C,D
Anne-Marie Pol	Écrivaine	A
Luda Schnitzer	Écrivaine/spécialiste de la littérature de jeunesse	A,C
Jacques Charpentreau	Écrivain/spécialiste de la poésie	A,D
Bernard Epin	Spécialiste de la littérature de jeunesse	C
Raoul Dubois	Spécialiste de la littérature de jeunesse	C
Jean Fabre	Éditeur pour la jeunesse (L'École des loisirs)	B
Monique Hennequin	Spécialiste de la littérature de jeunesse	C
Marie Lallouet	Éditrice (Éditions Casterman / secteur jeunesse)	B
Janine Despinette	Spécialiste de la littérature de jeunesse	C
Québec		
Dominique Demers	Écrivaine/spécialiste de la littérature de jeunesse	A,C
Monique Lebrun	Didacticienne du français	D
Michèle Marineau	Écrivaine	A
François Gravel	Écrivain	A
Gérard Purcell	Administrateur (Communication/Jeunesse)	C
Francine Sarrasin	Historienne de l'art / spécialiste de l'illustration	C
Robert Soulières	Éditeur (Soulières Éditions)/écrivain	A,B
Carmen Marois	Écrivaine	A

* *Sphères d'activités des agents:*
A — *Création*
B — *Édition*
C — *Enseignement et promotion de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse*
D — *Recherche et enseignement littéraires*

Chaque personne rencontrée devait répondre à trois questions dans le but de dégager ses diverses conceptions des idées de *littérature* et de *littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse* en fonction de l'enseignement de la littérature en classe de langue première. Les réponses émises alors étaient spontanées. Elles ont

été enregistrées sur bandes magnétiques, puis transcrites grâce au traitement de texte.

Des trois questions posées aux sujets interrogés, c'est la dernière qui constituait le nœud de notre démarche, car celle-ci était directement liée à notre problème de recherche. Le libellé des trois questions adressées aux agents rencontrés en Europe et au Québec est présenté dans le tableau 2.

Tableau 2
Questions d'entrevue

1) D'après vous, quel devrait être le rôle de l'école pour l'initiation littéraire des jeunes?
— Quels types d'enseignement proposer?
— Quels objectifs viser?
— Quels contenus d'enseignement transmettre?
— Quels textes littéraires y aborder?

2) À votre avis, un enseignement (systématique ...) de la littérature doit-il être réalisé exclusivement au niveau secondaire ou, au contraire, ne devrait-il pas être présent dès le début du cours primaire?
— Dans l'affirmative, quelle progression devrait-on suivre?
— Dans l'affirmative, quelles différences devrait-on établir entre l'ordre primaire et l'ordre secondaire?

3) Il existe, du moins dans le domaine de l'édition, une littérature qui se présente et se nomme comme destinée *à l'enfance et à la jeunesse*, littérature qui s'est développée au fil des ans. Comment concevez-vous cette littérature? Est-elle intéressante? Est-elle pertinente? Quelle est sa place et quel est son statut dans le champ littéraire? Quelle place et quel statut devrait-on lui réserver dans le domaine scolaire?

Fondamentalement, est-ce que cette littérature existe en soi ou, au contraire, n'y a-t-il qu'une littérature, c'est-à-dire des textes littéraires, peu importe l'âge du public lecteur (des destinataires)?

1.2 Comment traiter le contenu des entrevues?

Pour traiter la grande quantité d'informations obtenues au cours des trente-deux entrevues, nous avons d'abord choisi de transcrire le plus fidèlement possible l'intégralité des propos tenus par nos différents interlocuteurs et interlocutrices. Pour l'analyse de ces transcriptions, deux options s'offraient à nous: utiliser un logiciel d'analyse qualitative de données ou se livrer, par une lecture attentive et répétée, à une analyse interprétative des données (Huberman et Miles, 1991, p. 378), grâce notamment à certains «mots clés». Après avoir effectué quelques essais avec le logiciel *Nudist*, nous l'avons jugé peu utile et surtout beaucoup trop lourd pour l'analyse de nos transcriptions d'entrevues.

Deux éléments fondamentaux devaient être dégagés des transcriptions. Tout d'abord, il fallait percevoir les définitions proposées des idées de *littérature* et de *littérature d'enfance de jeunesse*. Par la suite, il convenait d'identifier la position de chaque personne rencontrée devant le problème du statut de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse par rapport à la littérature générale. Comme cet aspect pouvait être facilement dégagé à l'aide de cadres d'analyse prédéterminés, nous avons opté pour la seconde solution, celle de l'analyse interprétative.

Cette méthode qualitative de traitement des données, bien qu'exigeante et assez fastidieuse, répondait parfaitement à nos objectifs initiaux, soit de sonder en premier lieu les conceptions de chaque agent interrogé en regard de notre problème de recherche, puis de regrouper ces personnes selon le statut qu'elles attribuent à la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse par rapport à la littérature générale. De l'analyse présentée dans le premier article avait émergé l'hypothèse de l'existence d'une triple représentation de l'univers littéraire. Les entrevues viennent à leur tour confirmer la présence de trois positions épistémologiques chez les sujets interrogés. Les trois grandes «conceptions-types» utilisées pour l'analyse des discours sont présentées dans le tableau 3.

Tableau 3
«Conceptions-types» utilisées pour l'analyse qualitative des transcriptions

1re conception: une seule et unique littérature.
2e conception: deux littératures distinctes et autonomes.
3e conception: la littérature et une pré/para/sous-littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse.

Selon la première représentation, la littérature est un ensemble unique qui n'admet aucune distinction entre la *littérature* et la *littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse* (Poslaniec, 1992; Roy, 1994). Plusieurs personnes pensent au contraire qu'il existe deux espaces littéraires autonomes, deux champs littéraires distincts et indépendants avec chacun ses particularités propres (Soriano, 1975; Demers, 1994). Enfin, d'autres estiment plutôt que la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse se subordonne à «la» littérature, que la première est davantage une pré/para/sous-littérature (Massart, 1975; Legros, 1995; Vernet, 1995).

Ces trois conceptions viennent compliquer l'entreprise didactique de lecture/écriture littéraire, surtout en ce qui concerne le choix du corpus de référence. Il nous faut considérer chacune de ces trois positions, car c'est à partir de ce conflit que nous tenterons de proposer un nouveau modèle de corpus littéraire pour la classe de langue première, proposition qui reposera

sur les diverses conceptions mises de l'avant par les écrits et la série d'entrevues et qui, nous le souhaitons, pourra guider l'articulation des futurs programmes d'enseignement en langue première.

Dans ce but, nous avons lu et relu les transcriptions des entrevues afin d'y relever les définitions proposées et de préciser les positions soutenues par les agents rencontrés. Chaque personne a été par la suite classée dans l'un ou l'autre des trois «catégories» de cette triade : les tenants d'une littérature unique, les partisans de la prégnance de deux littératures indépendantes et les défenseurs d'une para/pré/sous-littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse subordonnée à «la» littérature. Il faut préciser toutefois que certains agents ont adopté des positions plus nuancées, mitoyennes entre deux tendances.

2 L'analyse du contenu des entrevues

Les personnes que nous avons rencontrées prennent manifestement part au débat relatif au statut de la littérature dite d'enfance et de jeunesse et soutiennent une position qu'il est assez aisé d'associer à l'un ou l'autre des pôles de notre triade. Nous examinerons chacune de ces positions en les illustrant par des extraits des transcriptions de nos entretiens.

2.1 Une seule et unique littérature

«Je considère que lorsqu'un écrivain met le meilleur de lui-même dans le texte d'un album [...] s'il le fait avec le désir de transmettre quelque chose qui sera appelé une œuvre classique pour les générations suivantes, même s'il ne s'agit que d'un poème de quelques phrases étalé dans trente pages d'un album, c'est de l'aussi grande littérature que le *Cid* de Corneille». Ainsi s'exprime Janine Despinette, spécialiste de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse, qui défend avec conviction l'idée d'une seule et unique littérature, sans aucune distinction.

Cette conception est partagée par Monique Hennequin, responsable à Paris du CRILJ (Centre de recherche et d'information en littérature de jeunesse), lorsqu'elle affirme qu'il y a «une littérature ...» et que «par essence, il n'y a pas de distinction». Elle réfute même ce que Poslaniec (1992) considère comme la seule et unique spécificité de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse: l'album. Madame Hennequin explique que «les albums sont littéraires et esthétiques; ça développe tout un imaginaire moderne, une sensibilité ...» et conclut: «lire, c'est aussi être citoyen. C'est donc très important». Aussi bien pour un enfant que pour un adulte.

Cette représentation de la littérature est principalement défendue par des créateurs, c'est-à-dire le groupe des écrivains et des illustrateurs. Anne-Marie Pol, Claude Lapointe, Yak Rivais, François Gravel, Michèle Marineau,

Carmen Marois et Robert Soulières adhèrent tous à l'idée d'une seule et unique littérature, sans aucune frontière que ce soit. L'illustrateur Claude Lapointe légitime son choix en dressant un parallèle entre la peinture et la littérature:

> Ce qui est étrange, c'est que l'illustration, par rapport à la peinture, est considérée comme un sous-produit, et la littérature de jeunesse, par rapport à la littérature, est considérée comme un sous-produit. Comme si le fait que ces deux domaines, ayant des contraintes, ne pouvaient faire partie du grand domaine de la littérature avec un grand **L** et de la peinture avec un grand **P**.

Francine Sarrasin, historienne de l'art et spécialiste de l'illustration des livres pour l'enfance et la jeunesse, adopte le point de vue de Claude Lapointe. «Toutes proportions gardées, au niveau de l'échelle d'apprentissage, je pense qu'il n'y a pas de distinction à établir entre une littérature pour adultes et une littérature pour enfants». Madame Sarrasin remarque que les illustrateurs, notamment ceux du Québec, et les auteurs qui œuvrent dans le domaine de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse effectuent tous une recherche approfondie afin de proposer des réalisations artistiques de qualité. Démarche qui permet justement aux jeunes «de cheminer, de partir, de plonger dans un univers d'imaginaire» analogue à celui des adultes.

L'auteure québécoise Michèle Marineau, comme son collègue François Gravel, revient sur l'existence de contraintes «plus grandes [...] de clarté» en littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse, qui font qu'il n'y a pas de séparation possible entre celle-ci et la littérature générale. François Gravel — qui écrit aussi pour les adultes — précise que «la particularité de la littérature jeunesse serait que c'est la seule qui est explicitement ciblée à un groupe [...] On est donc plus conscient de notre "client", notre lecteur».

Un seul des spécialistes de l'enseignement rencontrés opte pour cette représentation de l'espace littéraire. Jean-Louis Dufays, didacticien de la lecture littéraire à l'Université catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve en Belgique, considère que «la spécificité [de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse] n'existe [...] que sur le plan éditorial». Selon Dufays, «ce qui a une spécificité sur le plan des modes de publication, et des modes de critique, et des modes de présentation même des ouvrages, n'en a pas sur le plan des contenus et des formes d'écriture». Pourquoi? Parce ce qu'«il y n'a vraiment pas de rhétorique qui soit exclusive à la littérature de jeunesse, il n'y a pas de vocabulaire qui lui soit exclusif, il n'y a pas de contenu thématique qui lui soit exclusif».

Aux yeux du didacticien, cela n'est pas sans avoir d'incidence sur l'enseignement/apprentissage de la littérature en classe de français et sur le corpus des textes pour la classe de langue première. «Sur le plan didactique, je ne vois vraiment pas de raison pour établir une hiérarchie stricte et une séparation nette entre les œuvres de littérature dite de jeunesse et les œuvres

dites de littérature». Toutefois, il faut souligner qu'une telle prise de position demeure marginale dans le domaine de la didactique de la littérature, les agents qui y travaillent ayant plutôt tendance, comme nous le verrons, à soutenir des conceptions hiérarchisées de l'espace littéraire.

L'idée de «spécificité éditoriale» revient chez Raoul Dubois, spécialiste français de la littérature de jeunesse. Ce dernier avance qu'«il y a une édition pour la jeunesse et une édition générale [...] mais à l'intérieur des deux [...] il y a de la littérature». Or, quelle est la nature de cette littérature unique? «Toute œuvre littéraire est tentative de dialogue entre l'auteur et les lecteurs». Caractéristique qui se retrouve, d'après Dubois, aussi bien dans une certaine partie de l'édition générale que dans une certaine partie des textes édités en littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse.

Il y a la «bonne et la mauvaise» littérature, suggère l'écrivaine et spécialiste Luda Schnitzer. Et celle-ci d'avancer quelques preuves historiques: «La Fontaine n'écrivait pas ses fables pour les enfants, il les écrivait pour tout ce qu'il y avait de grand. Pouchkine, lorsqu'il a écrit ses contes, faisait un travail extrêmement sérieux sur le folklore. C'était publié dans des journaux uniquement pour les adultes!» La littérature n'est donc qu'une.

Dans ce courant de pensée, certains se font plus radicaux. C'est notamment le cas de l'écrivain et enseignant Yak Rivais, qui affirme avec force: «Quand on me parle de littérature de jeunesse, je dis non! Pour moi, cette idée n'existe pas [...] La littérature, qu'elle soit pour enfants ou pour adultes, c'est de la littérature». Encore plus explicite, l'écrivaine parisienne Anne-Marie Pol[4] soutient que la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse — aussi littéraire que la littérature générale — est victime du mépris des instances des champs littéraire et scolaire. «Pourquoi? Parce que ça s'adresse aux enfants, simplement, et l'enfant est toujours considéré avec condescendance par l'adulte. Je pense que si cette littérature est regardée de façon un peu dédaigneuse, c'est parce ce que l'enfant lui-même est dédaigné».

«Il y a une littérature puis il y a une mode pour les enfants. Il y a un paquet de choses pour les enfants» ironise l'écrivain et éditeur Robert Soulières. Conscient du problème du statut de l'enfant vis-à-vis de l'adulte, Soulières souligne que «s'il n'y a pas de littérature de jeunesse forte, il n'y aura pas de lecteurs adultes forts». Là réside, selon l'auteur/éditeur, l'essence des textes littéraires: la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse se doit nécessairement d'être aussi littéraire — aussi aboutie — que la littérature dite pour adultes, car on y forme les lecteurs adultes de demain.

L'écrivaine Carmen Marois dénonce à son tour, en souscrivant à une représentation unitaire du champ littéraire, l'attitude complaisante des littéraires à l'égard de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse. Elle prétend que les écrivains de ce secteur éditorial doivent être beaucoup plus vigilants quant aux thèmes, aux contenus et même aux mots qu'ils présentent à leurs jeunes lecteurs. Circonspection qui conduit nécessairement, selon la

Québécoise, les écrivains d'enfance et de jeunesse à produire des histoires mieux articulées et surtout mieux narrées.

Robert Soulières abonde dans le même sens que l'écrivaine Marois: «De toute façon, qu'on soit un grand romancier "Best Seller", ou un [écrivain] très intellectuel, ou un auteur de livres pour enfants, on a tous les mêmes vingt-six lettres, sauf qu'on ne les met pas à la même place. On les juxtapose à notre façon». À l'instar de Claude Lapointe, Soulières établit un lien entre la littérature et une autre forme d'art: «C'est comme la musique. Tu as sept notes et tu peux faire un monde. [...] Ça répond à des besoins différents et à des moments de la vie différents». Ses collègues Gérard Purcell et Jacques Clément abondent dans le même sens et ne comprennent pas comment on pourrait se représenter autrement la littérature.

En résumé, toutes ces personnes défendent avec fermeté une conception unitaire du champ littéraire. Pour elles, il s'avère erroné, voire absurde ou même dangereux, d'envisager l'espace littéraire de façon hiérarchisée et de le compartimenter en territoires séparés.

2.2 Deux littératures distinctes et autonomes

Contrairement aux gens cités plus haut, les tenants de cette deuxième position pensent qu'il n'existe non pas un seul et même champ littéraire, mais plutôt deux champs indépendants: le champ de la littérature générale et le champ de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse. À travers leurs ressemblances et leurs différences, ces deux champs demeurent, du moins au niveau éditorial, des entités en constante évolution.

On constate que beaucoup moins de personnes — notamment chez les créateurs littéraires — choisissent cette représentation du domaine littéraire. Susie Morgenstern est d'ailleurs la seule, avec Dominique Demers, du groupe des écrivains interrogés, qui adhère à cette définition dichotomique de l'espace littéraire. «Je ne suis pas de celles qui militent pour dire "non, nous ne sommes pas de la littérature pour la jeunesse, nous sommes de la littérature tout court". Ça me convient très bien de dire qu'on est une littérature spécifique». À l'opposé des écrivains québécois Marineau et Gravel, Susie Morgenstern justifie sa position en précisant qu'il existe effectivement des règles et des contraintes propres à la littérature de jeunesse, éléments qui forgent son identité spécifique par rapport à la littérature pour adultes.

Ce sont surtout les spécialistes de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse (professeurs, critiques, *etc.*) qui défendent l'existence de deux littératures distinctes et autonomes. Le professeur Jean Perrot croit profondément à la spécificité du champ littéraire pour l'enfance et la jeunesse face à celui de la littérature générale. Le pédagogue motive cette prise de position en soulignant que la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse est confrontée à un problème de reconnaissance: «Elle n'est pas encore à statut tout à fait égal avec la littérature

dite générale [...] parce que les institutions qui la légitiment ne sont pas encore à statut égal». En référence à la théorie de la sociologie de la littérature de Pierre Bourdieu, Perrot voit ainsi l'avenir des deux espaces en jeu: «La valeur symbolique de la littérature de jeunesse sera à égalité avec celle de la littérature générale quand le statut de l'enfant sera mis au même niveau [que celui de l'adulte]». Ce qui rejoint, d'une certaine manière, l'opinion citée plus haut de l'écrivaine Anne-Marie Pol.

Bernard Epin, qui a rédigé plusieurs ouvrages sur la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse, abonde dans le même sens que Jean Perrot. «Il y a [...] historiquement et aujourd'hui des œuvres qui rencontrent l'enfance». Ce qui lui fait dire que la littérature de jeunesse est une littérature vouée à un public spécifique, «une vraie littérature» pour un public déterminé, les enfants et les jeunes, distinct d'un autre, celui des adultes.

Les codirecteurs de la revue belge de littérature de jeunesse *Alice*, Daniel Fano et Nicole Nachtergeale, considèrent eux aussi qu'il existe deux littératures distinctes. Fano fonde cette position en affirmant que «la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse se justifie en tant qu'entité autonome parce qu'elle produit des mythes».

Au Québec, Dominique Demers est bien connue de par sa triple situation d'écrivaine, de critique littéraire et de spécialiste de la «littérature jeunesse», pour reprendre une expression qui lui est chère. Elle défend aussi une définition bipolaire de l'espace littéraire. Selon elle, «la littérature de jeunesse mérite, doit absolument exister». La «littérature jeunesse», en soi, «c'est un autre art, c'est un autre champ littéraire». Pourquoi donc? «On a inventé les livres pour enfants parce qu'on venait d'inventer l'enfance. On a inventé la littérature jeunesse quand on a inventé l'adolescence». C'est justement ce dernier phénomène qui engendre, selon Dominique Demers, un clivage entre les deux champs. «Il y a tellement de différences, l'album, etc. Même le petit roman [premier roman]. C'est une littérature de transition». Bref, la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse — la littérature jeunesse — servirait à initier puis à préparer le passage du jeune vers la littérature générale. «Mais ce n'est surtout pas une sous-littérature!»

2.3 Une pré/para/sous-littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse

Selon une troisième tendance, quelques agents suggèrent des définitions fortement hiérarchisées de l'espace littéraire. Pour eux, il n'existe qu'une seule et véritable littérature — «la» littérature — autour de laquelle gravitent, dans des sous-champs, quelques «satellites» dont la littérature dite d'enfance et de jeunesse, la littérature policière, etc. Ces «paralittératures», ces «prélittératures», ces «sous-littératures» demeurent toutes des manifestations littéraires en marge de la grande littérature, celle reconnue et instituée comme telle.

Le professeur Pierre Yerlès, didacticien du français à l'Université catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve, adhère à une telle conception. Il associe ainsi la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse à «la littérature des *minores*, les petites littératures, auxquelles peut-être un certain type de public, qu'il soit le public populaire, peut-être aussi le public de l'enfance et de l'adolescence, a plus aisément accès que certains grands textes littéraires».

Georges Legros, lui aussi didacticien du français et de la littérature à l'Université de Namur, justifie ainsi sa position:

> Si, comme j'ai tendance à le croire [...] les œuvres destinées à la jeunesse sont plutôt des copies de ce qui s'est inventé un certain temps auparavant, ailleurs, en gros si les romans pour les jeunes s'écrivent comme sont écrits les romans pour les adultes auparavant, alors j'aurai tendance à dire qu'il y a là quelque chose qui ne participe pas au mouvement de la littérature.

Le professeur Legros perçoit la littérature de jeunesse comme un «moment», un moyen plus facile que d'autres pour aider les jeunes élèves à entrer dans le monde de la littérature. Il poursuit ainsi: «[...] sûrement pas comme un objectif ou comme un champ de textes dans lequel on pourrait rester». En somme, la littérature de jeunesse ne pourrait être appréhendée «comme un champ autonome, mais plutôt comme un sous-champ».

Dans la même veine, la didacticienne québécoise Monique Lebrun de l'UQAM affirme: «Il n'y a qu'un seul vaste champ, c'est le champ de la littérature [...] Il y a la littérature de jeunesse, c'est un sous-champ. C'est un sous-champ comme la littérature féministe est un sous-champ». Madame Lebrun soutient qu'«il existe des schémas en littérature de jeunesse et ces schémas sont d'autant plus voyants que les jeunes lecteurs, eux, ne font pas la sélection [...] ils n'ont pas le filtre que nous avons, nous les adultes». La spécialiste considère en effet qu'il existe, en littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse, une répétition dans les thèmes, les personnages, les lieux, les structures narratives, etc., qui contribue à uniformiser la production issue de cet espace éditorial, ce qui enlève à ces œuvres une part de leur originalité littéraire.

Déjà, au milieu des années 1970, le professeur de littérature Pierre Massart, de l'Université catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve, n'hésitait pas à concevoir la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse comme une paralittérature, entité distincte de la littérature consacrée. Selon lui, parmi les formes variées des «littératures marginales» — polar, science-fiction, etc. —, la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse se situerait toutefois à la frontière de la sphère littéraire (Massart, 1975, p. 162). Le professeur Massart a conservé cette position à l'occasion de notre passage en Belgique.

2.4 Des prises de positions ambivalentes

Quelques-unes des personnes rencontrées n'ont pas explicitement souscrit à l'une ou l'autre des trois positions précédemment relevées, préférant plutôt nuancer leurs propositions et se situer ainsi au carrefour de deux des trois représentations de l'espace littéraire. La grande majorité de ces agents oscille entre l'idée d'une littérature unique et celle de deux littératures distinctes et autonomes. L'écrivain Jean-Louis Maunoury est l'un d'entre eux.

> Je serais tenté de dire que plus on s'adresse à des enfants âgés, moins la distinction est valable, puisqu'à la limite, l'une [la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse] se fond dans l'autre [la littérature générale]. On arrive à un âge où la notion n'a plus de sens. Il ne faut pas être extémiste [...] On ne peut pas dire que ce qu'on propose à des enfants de 6 ans puisse être de la littérature générale qui pourrait intéresser un adulte.

Cet autre extrait de notre entretien avec l'écrivain illustre bien l'ambiguïté de ce dernier en regard d'une prise de position tranchée: «Je crois qu'un bon livre pour enfant devrait pouvoir être lu par un adulte [...] comme un livre qui le concerne encore en tant qu'ancien enfant». Ambivalence que partage Rolande Causse, écrivaine et spécialiste de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse. «On peut dire qu'il n'y a qu'une seule littérature. C'est vrai et ce n'est pas vrai. Ça peut aller dans un sens, ça ne peut pas aller dans l'autre». Elle précise ainsi sa pensée:

> Mes livres [de jeunesse] sont de la littérature, on est d'accord. Mais, dans l'autre sens, si on prend un écrivain comme Joyce ... *Ulysse*. C'est de la littérature, on est tous d'accord. Est-ce qu'on peut le donner aux enfants? [...] Alors, si vous voulez, la littérature de jeunesse est de la littérature, mais en revanche une partie de la littérature ne peut pas être mise dans les classes.

Jean Fabre, fondateur et président de la maison d'édition française L'École des loisirs, hésite lui aussi à soutenir une position unique, même s'il considère que toute littérature, quelle qu'elle soit, «est une littérature identique aux autres». Jean Fabre tempère pourtant cette prémisse. «Prendre en conscience l'écart qu'il peut y avoir entre la littérature de jeunesse et la littérature des adultes, c'est le fait que les motivations qui suscitent l'intérêt du jeune lecteur ne sont pas les mêmes qui suscitent l'intérêt des adultes». L'éditrice Marie Lallouet (Casterman / secteur jeunesse) semble tout aussi ambivalente: «La littérature de jeunesse, je pense qu'elle existe en tant que telle [...] Je crois que tout est de la littérature.»

Jacques Charpentreau, poète et spécialiste de la poésie, se retrouve lui aussi «pris entre deux feux». Il se situe en effet à mi-chemin entre l'idée d'une littérature unique et celle et d'une pré/para/sous-littérature d'enfance

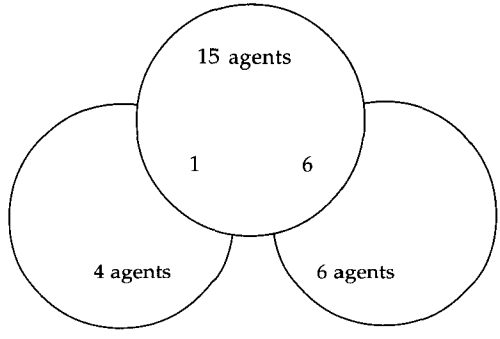
et de jeunesse. «Il y a ce que l'on souhaite et il y a les faits. Dans les faits, il existe deux littératures, et je dirai même qu'il existe un ghetto de la littérature [...] Il vient en partie d'un mépris pour l'enfance». Après avoir noté ce préjugé déjà dénoncé par l'écrivaine Anne-Marie Pol, Charpentreau exprime le souhait «qu'il n'y ait qu'une seule littérature, avec des stratifications et puis des galeries qui permettent d'aller vers ...».

Synthèse

De trente-deux entrevues réalisées avec des agents des champs littéraire et scolaire, retenons en premier lieu qu'une seule personne s'est abstenue de prendre position quant au problème de la définition de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse par rapport à la littérature générale. Tous les autres agents rencontrés ont explicitement soutenu l'une ou l'autre des trois représentations relevées et mentionnées plus haut ou ont choisi, du moins, de nuancer leur engagement en optant pour une position mitoyenne. Le tableau 4 fait état de la situation des agents par rapport à la conception défendue de l'espace littéraire.

Tableau 4
Répartition des agents en fonction de leur conception

Une seule et unique littérature



La littératire et une pré/para/ sous-littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse

Deux littératures distinctes et autonomes

* *Une personne s'est abstenue de prendre position.*

La faible taille de l'échantillon et son déséquilibre ne permettent évidemment pas de parvenir à des conclusions générales, mais la somme des informations recueillies au cours des 32 entretiens nous aide à dégager certaines tendances et à mieux cerner le débat lié au problème de la définition de l'idée de littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse par rapport à celle de littérature dite générale. Notre enquête vient confirmer une hypothèse de recherche initiale, issue de la recension des écrits, à savoir qu'on peut distinguer trois grandes positions épistémologiques comme le démontrent les tableaux 4 et 5.

Tableau 5
Répartition en % des agents rencontrés en fonction de la conception défendue

	Nombre d'agents	%
Une seule et unique littérature	15	46,9
Deux littératures distinctes et autonomes	6	18,8
La littérature et une pré/para/sous-littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse	4	12,5
Conception bipolaire (deux des trois positions)	6	18,8
Abstention	1	3,0
Total:	32	100,0

Notons qu'une majorité d'agents quinze personnes (46,9%) — considère qu'il n'existe qu'une seule et unique littérature, que le champ littéraire est un grand tout unitaire, mais qui peut cependant, selon quelques agents, être constitué de deux domaines éditoriaux spécifiques: l'édition pour l'enfance et la jeunesse ainsi que l'édition pour adultes. Toutes ces personnes qui défendent cette représentation insistent sur le fait qu'il n'existe aucune distinction d'essence entre la littérature dite générale et la littérature dite d'enfance et de jeunesse.

Les agents qui soutiennent l'idée d'une seule et unique littérature — d'une façon assez intuitive, d'ailleurs — sont pour la plupart des créateurs (écrivains, illustrateurs). De nombreux spécialistes de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse ainsi que quelques éditeurs participent aussi de cette mouvance. Un seul didacticien rencontré entrevoit ainsi l'espace littéraire.

En revanche, six agents, soit 18,8 % des personnes rencontrées en entrevue, soutiennent que la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse et la littérature pour adultes sont distinctes l'une de l'autre et constituent deux champs

autonomes. Les personnes qui se représentent ainsi l'univers littéraire sont, pour la plupart, des spécialistes de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse (professeurs, critiques, animateurs, etc.). D'après eux, la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse possède des éléments distinctifs, dont l'âge des lecteurs, et des caractéristiques formelles propres, par exemple les récits illustrés (albums), ces éléments faisant en sorte que cette littérature se différencie de la littérature générale.

Dans un troisième temps, seulement quartre agents (12,5 %) prétendent que le champ littéraire est un vaste domaine autour duquel gravitent des pré/para/sous-littératures, dont la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse. Ces personnes sont des spécialistes de l'enseignement de la littérature, didacticiens ou littéraires. Ils conçoivent en effet la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse comme une littérature d'initiation à la grande littérature légitimée (une prélittérature), cette littérature ne créant rien d'innovateur et se contentant de reproduire ce qui a été inventé auparavant au sein de la grande littérature (une para/sous-littérature). Bien que nécessaire à l'éveil littéraire des enfants et des jeunes, la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse ne peut prétendre au même statut que la littérature générale. Son rôle se réduirait à servir de porte d'entrée plus facile à l'univers littéraire consacré.

Les six derniers agents (18,8 %) se situent à la croisée de deux des trois positions relevées. Ils hésitent en majorité entre la défense d'une conception unitaire du champ littéraire ou d'une représentation dichotomique d'une littérature constituée de deux champs spécifiques. Pour justifier leur position plus ambiguë, ils soulignent la pertinence des arguments des deux «camps».

Près de cinquante pour cent des personnes rencontrées en entrevue défendent donc une conception unitaire du champ littéraire. Ce sont les créateurs qui revendiquent ainsi, pour la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse, un statut littéraire égalitaire face à la littérature générale. À l'opposé, les didacticiens de la littérature et les littéraires semblent plutôt attachés à une représentation hierarchisée de l'espace littéraire.

La définition de la littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse par rapport à la littérature générale suscite, de toute évidence, des prises de positions différentes entre le champ didactique et le champ artistique. Y aurait-il une scission entre le monde de la création et le monde de l'enseignement? Considérant les données de notre étude, nous aurions tendance à le croire ...

Pour la suite de nos travaux, il nous reste à dégager des résultats de notre recension des écrits et de nos entrevues certains principes pour l'établissement d'un modèle de corpus des textes littéraires pour la classe de langue première. Cette démarche sera l'objet de notre troisième et dernier article.

Notes

1 Voir le premier article publié dans le numéro précédent de *CCL/LCJ*: Boutin, Jean-François, «Le problème du corpus de textes littéraires en classe de langue première. Examen des idées de *littérature* et de *littérature d'enfance et de jeunesse*», *CCL/LCJ*, 91/92, vol.24, 3/4, automne/hiver 1998, p. 83-102.

2 L'*épistémè* d'une discipline ou un champ d'étude peut être défini comme l'ensemble des connaissances établies qui lui sont propres.

3 Consulter le premier article, où l'idée d'*épistémologie* est définie en tant que réflexion sur la constitution des savoirs — disciplinaires — en contexte, ici la classe de langue première.

4 Anne-Marie Pol, écrivaine française, a vu l'un de ses textes, *Le Galop du templier*, être publié au Québec par les Éditions Hurtubise HMH (collection Plus).

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Angèle Delaunois: lauréate du Prix du Gouverneur général du Canada

• *Jean-Denis Côté* •

Summary: *In this interview, Angèle Delaunois, a 1998 Governor's General Award Winner, reflects upon her literary career. She attempts to define the specificity and present state of children's literature in Québec, and insists that authors and publishers should advocate high literary and linguistic standards.*

Résumé: *Dans cette entrevue, Angèle Delaunois, lauréate du Prix du Gouverneur général du Canada en 1998, retrace les grandes étapes de sa carrière littéraire. Elle tente de cerner la spécificité de la littérature pour la jeunesse et insiste sur la nécessité d'exiger de la part des auteurs et des éditeurs le maintien d'un très haut niveau de qualité littéraire.*

L'écrivaine Angèle Delaunois, Française d'origine et immigrée au Québec depuis 1968, a remporté le Prix du Gouverneur général du Canada, édition 1998, dans la catégorie «texte» en littérature jeunesse pour son recueil de nouvelles *Variations sur un même «t'aime»*[1]. Elle était présente lors du dernier Salon du livre de Montréal[2] et m'a accordé une entrevue. Elle y aborde sa relation à l'écriture, son travail de direction littéraire et d'édition, ainsi que les activités de promotion auxquelles elle a participé. Elle partage aussi avec nous ses positions sur la dynamique du champ de la littérature jeunesse.

La relation à l'écriture

Jean-Denis Côté: *Angèle Delaunois, quand avez-vous commencé à écrire de la fiction?*

Angèle Delaunois: C'est récent. J'ai eu plusieurs carrières avant d'arriver à l'écriture. J'ai été professeur d'arts plastiques pendant de longues années, entre autres chargée de cours à l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières où j'ai fait mes études. Je suis arrivée à Montréal en 1981 et je me suis impliquée dans un mouvement de protection du consommateur. J'ai dirigé des dossiers sur les jouets et sur les livres avec *Protégez-vous/Protect Yourself* et c'est ce qui m'a amenée à l'écriture. Tout ce qui était publié en littérature jeunesse se retrouvait sur mon bureau. À force de lire des livres pour les jeunes, je me suis dit que ce serait peut-être une bonne idée d'en écrire. J'ai débuté en écrivant des documentaires[3]. Ensuite, j'ai abordé la fiction.

J.-D.C.: *Parlez-nous un peu de votre recueil Variations sur un même «t'aime».*

A.D.: *Variations* est un recueil de neuf nouvelles, articulées autour de l'amour. Chaque nouvelle illustre un sentiment différent qui touche à l'amour. Il y a la séduction, la compassion, la haine, l'amour fou, le chagrin, la trahison, la tendresse, le bonheur et l'amitié. Chaque nouvelle m'a été inspirée par des jeunes qui m'entourent et par des petits événements de la vie quotidienne. Tous les héros sont des adolescents. Le créneau d'âge est large, assez varié. Ça va de 14 à 18-19 ans. C'est une écriture très classique, très émotive. *Variations* est mon deuxième livre de fiction.

J.-D.C.: *Lorsque vous écrivez, y a-t-il des moments d'angoisse?*

A.D.: Oui, absolument! Je suis habitée par le doute du début à la fin. Je n'ai pas de recul critique par rapport à ce que j'écris. Je trouve très reposant le fait d'avoir un directeur littéraire qui va me dire: «Là, ça marche, là, ça ne marche pas, reprends tel passage.» Quelqu'un, donc, qui va vraiment me donner une nouvelle lecture de mon livre. Je suis très tatillonne en ce qui concerne mon écriture. J'ai des tics ridicules. Par exemple, écrire toujours à l'encre la première version. Ou encore, faire le grand ménage de la maison au complet pour éviter de me mettre à écrire. C'est idiot, car je sais bien que je triche.

J.-D.C.: *Avez-vous déjà été victime de censure? Vous autocensurez-vous?*

A.D.: Non, je n'ai jamais été victime de censure. Mais lorsqu'on écrit pour la

jeunesse, il y a des limites. On ne peut pas aller trop loin. Cela se situe sur le plan des valeurs véhiculées. Comme directrice littéraire, je n'accepterais pas un manuscrit complètement négatif ou bien un héros malhonnête, vraiment noir. Je crois que nous avons une responsabilité importante: nous ne devons pas tuer l'espoir chez les jeunes. Nous devons au contraire le faire vivre. Il doit toujours y avoir une ouverture vers la lumière, vers quelque chose de pur. C'est sur ce plan que je situe ma propre autocensure. Dans *Variations sur un même «t'aime»*, j'ai abordé des sujets risqués: l'érotisme, la mort. L'important, c'est que l'optique générale reste très respectueuse du jeune lecteur. En littérature jeunesse, on ne peut pas se permettre tout ce que l'on peut faire en littérature adulte.

J.-D.C.: *La nouvelle «Aïcha» n'est-elle pas tout de même critique par rapport à la religion musulmane?*

A.D.: Je ne pense pas avoir posé un jugement critique sur la religion comme telle. «Aïcha», c'est un témoignage qui m'a été confié. Je n'ai rien inventé. Une jeune femme m'a raconté comment elle avait été mariée. Les écrivains sont là pour témoigner et j'ai témoigné de cette réalité qui existe encore. Pourquoi n'en parlerions-nous pas?

J.-D.C.: *Retravaillez-vous beaucoup vos textes?*

A.D.: Ah oui! À un moment donné, je me fixe une limite, car je ne suis jamais contente. Il faut arrêter, puisqu'à force de corriger, on enlève toute la fraîcheur à un texte. Certains de mes textes sont davantage peaufinés que d'autres.

J.-D.C.: *Combien avez-vous fait de versions pour* ***Variations****?*

A.D.: C'est difficile à dire. Comme ce sont des nouvelles, certaines m'ont demandé plus de travail que d'autres. On le sent dans l'écriture. Par exemple, j'ai étiré la conception de la nouvelle sur le bonheur, «Le roi Arthur», sur une période de deux mois. Je l'ai polie, j'ai changé des mots, je me sentais très bien dans l'environnement que j'avais créé. J'ai fait durer le plaisir. J'ai changé la fin au moins dix fois! Je savais ce que je voulais dire, mais je n'arrivais pas à l'exprimer. Alors, j'ai modifié le texte jusqu'à ce que j'arrive à un résultat satisfaisant. À l'inverse, «Un cadeau pour Sarah» a été écrite dans la fureur et le chagrin. Je n'ai pas été capable de la retravailler. Sur le plan de l'écriture, c'est sans doute celle qui est la moins polie. Mais comme je l'ai écrite en pleurs, je suis sûre que l'émotion passe. D'après ce qu'on m'en dit, elle suscite beaucoup de réactions.

J.-D.C.: *Vous venez de remporter le prix littéraire le plus prestigieux au Canada*[4]*. Cela change-t-il quelque chose?*

A.D.: Je suis très honorée d'avoir reçu le Prix du Gouverneur général du Canada. Pour un auteur, c'est un événement inoubliable. Je suis d'autant plus heureuse qu'il m'a été décerné pour un livre qui n'est pas facile, qui est complexe, tant sur le plan de l'écriture que sur celui des thèmes abordés. J'ai reçu d'autres prix pour certains de mes documentaires et j'ai aussi été finaliste

en 1998 pour le Prix Christie (pour *La Chèvre de Monsieur Potvin*[5]). Vous savez, le travail d'écrivain en est un de solitaire. Nous sommes seuls, enfermés dans notre bulle et tout d'un coup, quand on gagne un prix comme celui-là, nous nous retrouvons sous les feux de la rampe. C'est à la fois très excitant et très dérangeant. Mais c'est un beau *feeling* puisque ça me donne beaucoup d'énergie pour continuer. Je me sens rassurée par le choix de mes pairs. Cela m'aide à maintenir une certaine confiance en moi. J'en ai besoin. Le contact avec les autres lauréats a été aussi très enrichissant. J'ai eu l'impression d'appartenir à une grande confrérie, à une belle continuité, de parler avec des gens qui vivaient l'écriture comme je la vis, qui avaient la même passion et la même exigence. Des gens que je n'aurais probablement jamais rencontrés autrement. C'était formidable.

J.-D.C.: *En parlant d'écriture, qu'est-ce qui fait qu'un texte appartient à la littérature jeunesse?*

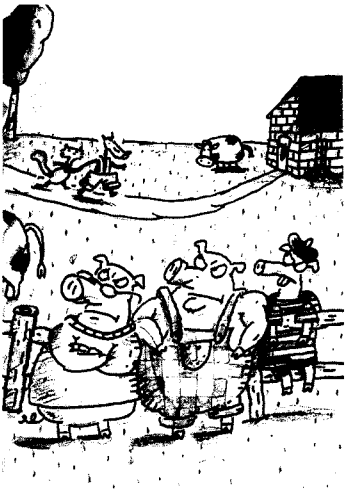
A.D.: En fait, il y a plusieurs façons d'écrire pour les jeunes. On n'écrit pas de la même façon pour les petits de quatre à cinq ans que pour ceux de huit à dix ans ou pour les adolescents. Ces niveaux de lecture, qu'il faut impérativement respecter, sont contraignants pour les auteurs. Si l'on écrit pour les petits, il faut moins de personnages, une action plus simple, des lieux moins nombreux et une histoire très linéaire. Au fur et à mesure que les jeunes acquièrent des connaissances et développent leur faculté d'abstraction, on peut complexifier les choses. Quand on arrive à la littérature pour les adolescents, il n'y a presque plus de marge. On peut les rejoindre en utilisant des effets de style assez semblables à ceux de la littérature adulte, mais il faut surtout les rejoindre dans ce qui les touche, dans ce qui les intéresse.

J.-D.C.: *Écrivez-vous également pour les adultes?*

A.D.: J'ai écrit un livre pour les adultes, en collaboration avec Francine Allard: *Baby-boom blues*[6]. Ce n'est pas une biographie classique, mais plutôt un échange de souvenirs assez humoristiques sur les petits et grands événements de notre enfance. Nous avons fait une sorte d'étude comparative sur son enfance à Verdun et sur la mienne à Gennevilliers. Nous sommes nées toutes les deux après la guerre, en banlieue des deux plus grandes villes francophones de l'époque, Montréal et Paris. Nous avons comparé comment ça se passait ici et là-bas. Nous avons eu un plaisir fou à écrire ce livre. Une belle histoire d'amitié.

J.-D.C.: *Qu'est-ce qui est le plus difficile: écrire pour les adultes ou pour les jeunes?*

A.D.: Je trouve qu'écrire pour les jeunes est très exigeant. Pour les adultes, on peut développer un style et s'en tenir à cela. Même si on ne fait pas l'unanimité, on peut quand même espérer rejoindre un certain public de la «même race» que soi. Mais pour les jeunes, c'est une autre histoire. Comme je le disais précédemment, nous avons à respecter des créneaux d'âge qui influencent beaucoup notre façon d'écrire, surtout si nous voulons diversifier notre pro-



Les Trois Petits Sagouins, de Angèle Delaunois, illustré par Philippe Germain (Éditions Pierre Tisseyre)

duction. Ce n'est pas vrai que la littérature jeunesse, comme on le croit souvent, est une sous-littérature pour les auteurs adultes ratés. N'écrit pas pour les jeunes qui veut, cela me semble évident. Lors de mon discours de réception au Conseil des Arts, j'ai mis l'accent là-dessus et je vais en faire mon cheval de bataille. Les auteurs de littérature jeunesse ne sont pas encore considérés comme ils devraient l'être. Pourtant, nous avons l'immense responsabilité de former les lecteurs de demain.

J.-D.C.: *Quels sont vos projets d'écriture?*

A.D.: J'ai plusieurs projets. Tout d'abord, je veux continuer à écrire ce que j'appelle des «contes coquins» qui actualisent et bousculent certains contes classiques. Actuellement, j'en ai écrit deux: *La Chèvre de Monsieur Potvin* (pastiche de celle de Monsieur Daudet) et *Les Trois Petits Sagouins*[7] (pour régler un vieux compte avec *Les Trois Petits Cochons*). Celui que je veux écrire pour le printemps s'appellera *Junior Poucet*. Il s'agit d'une adaptation très libre du *Petit Poucet*. Le thème, bien sûr, ce sont les enfants qui perdent sans cesse leurs affaires. Je termine également un conte classique, *Le Papillon des neiges*, qui met en scène un roi triste, une princesse qui n'aime pas l'hiver et une magicienne qui essaie d'arranger les choses. C'est une jolie histoire où j'essaie d'exploiter au maximum ce que j'appelle la «poésie du froid».

Comme autre projet, j'aimerais écrire un second recueil de nouvelles pour les adolescents, à caractère fantastique celui-là. J'ai déjà plusieurs squelettes de textes dans mes dossiers. J'aimerais aussi écrire deux romans: l'un sur une confrontation culturelle et l'autre ayant pour thème la prostitution infantile. Mais je ne suis pas pressée. Tout cela doit mijoter longtemps dans ma tête avant de voir le jour.

J.-D.C.: *Quelles sont les qualités d'un bon roman?*

A.D.: Il y en aurait long à dire là-dessus. Tout d'abord, il faut que ce soit bien écrit. Que l'auteur imprime sa personnalité dans ses mots! Un roman, ce n'est pas seulement une histoire qui est racontée mais aussi quelqu'un qui la raconte. Cela doit se sentir. Les romans ne sont pas des Big Mac, tous interchangeables. Ensuite, il faut qu'il soit original. Comme partout, il y a des modes en littérature jeunesse et on rencontre souvent les mêmes thèmes. Les auteurs doivent faire l'effort de renouveler leurs thématiques. Il faut aussi, bien entendu, que le roman soit bien adapté au public qu'il vise et que l'auteur ne dérape pas d'un créneau à l'autre. Je dirais qu'en littérature jeunesse, ce sont les trois pivots importants.

J.-D.C.: *Quels sont les écrivains qui vous ont influencée?*

A.D.: Deux écrivains me suivent depuis mon adolescence. Je les relis fréquemment. Il s'agit de Jean Giono et de Colette. Leur écriture est sensuelle, leurs images sont riches, pleines de sens pour moi. Bien sûr, j'aime Gabrielle Roy (on compare souvent ma façon d'écrire à la sienne) et Gilles Vigneault, que je relis souvent avec plaisir sans me lasser. Alexandra David-Neel est un personnage qui me fascine, autant dans ce qu'elle a écrit que dans ce qu'elle a vécu. C'est un peu mon modèle. En littérature jeunesse, j'avoue que j'aime beaucoup Daniel Pennac et Daniel Sernine. Ce sont tous deux de grands auteurs ayant une imagination extraordinaire et une grande rigueur dans la construction des textes.. Depuis quelques années, j'aime beaucoup lire des biographies de personnages historiques célèbres.

J.-D.C.: *Y a-t-il des valeurs que vous cherchez à transmettre?*

A.D.: Oui, c'est évident. Je suis une optimiste. Je trouve que la vie est belle, qu'on peut trouver la sérénité, la paix, la joie, dans un tas de petites choses de la vie. Je pense que cela transparaît dans mon écriture. Je ne crois pas que le monde soit aussi pourri qu'on veut bien le dire. Les jeunes autour de moi se débrouillent assez bien. Beaucoup de possibilités et de choix leur sont offerts. Il suffit de voyager un peu pour constater à quel point nous sommes gâtés ici. Nous avons différentes lectures de la société. Bien sûr, la vie nous apporte aussi des épreuves. Nous devons traverser la maladie, la mort de nos proches. Mais tout cela fait partie d'un tout. Ce que je tente de promouvoir comme valeurs premières, ce sont l'espoir et la compassion.

J.-D.C.: *Si ce que vous écrivez avait une fonction utilitaire, quelle serait cette fonction?*

A.D.: Avant tout, j'écris des livres pour que les gens aient du plaisir à me lire. Comme j'utilise un vocabulaire assez complexe, une fonction utilitaire indirecte pourrait être de développer celui de mes lecteurs. J'aime croire aussi que je peux susciter chez eux une certaine forme de réflexion.

J.-D.C.: *Qu'est-ce qui va vous chercher lorsque vient le temps d'inventer une histoire?*

A.D.: C'est variable. Parfois, une image me frappe, s'impose à mon imagination. Dans certains cas, c'est une phrase qui me poursuit, qu'il faut absolument

que je place quelque part pour m'en débarrasser. Quelquefois, c'est une réaction émotive. Je vous disais tantôt que j'avais envie d'écrire un roman sur la prostitution infantile. Cette idée m'est venue à la suite d'un reportage que j'ai vu à l'émission *Le Point* à la télévision de Radio-Canada. Une gamine de treize ans y racontait comment et pourquoi elle se prostituait. On y voyait également un type qui racontait sans pudeur venir en République Dominicaine pour sauter impunément des petites filles de douze ans. S'il avait fait la même chose dans son pays, il aurait passé le reste de sa vie en prison. Ce reportage m'a beaucoup choquée. C'est comme ça que j'ai eu l'étincelle pour cette histoire que je vais sûrement écrire un jour. Dans ce cas-là, c'est vraiment l'émotion qui m'a fait réagir.

J.-D.C.: *Quand vous lisez des histoires, ce sont les émotions qui vous frappent?*

A.D.: Quand je lis une histoire, je suis sensible aux mêmes choses qu'à celles que j'écris. J'aime les images, les mots employés par l'auteur et les émotions qu'il me communique. Je suis une bonne lectrice. Comme je lis beaucoup, il faut vraiment que ces trois éléments soient présents dans un livre pour que celui-ci se démarque des autres et entre ainsi dans le cercle de mes familiers.

Les activités de promotion

J.-D.C.: *Avez-vous déjà participé à des tournées dans les écoles?*

A.D.: Oui. En avril dernier, j'ai participé à la tournée «Idélire» organisée par Suzanne Nepveu en Colombie-Britannique[8]. J'ai vraiment été impressionnée. Je ne savais pas qu'il y avait autant de francophones à l'autre bout du Canada. J'ai rencontré des jeunes qui étaient dans des classes d'immersion et qui s'exprimaient très bien en français. Au Québec, je participe à la tournée des écrivains dans les écoles et à la tournée «Lire dans l'Île». C'est toujours très stimulant de voir les petites frimousses qui posent des questions. Nous faisons quelquefois des rencontres très émouvantes. Par contre, c'est exigeant et assez fatigant physiquement.

J.-D.C.: *Aimez-vous une activité de promotion telle que le Salon du livre? Vous avez gagné le prix du Gouverneur général du Canada. C'est donc un peu particulier cette année.*

A.D.: Bien sûr que j'aime tous les Salons du livre. C'est vrai que cette année, c'est très spécial pour moi. Le Salon du livre de Montréal est une superbe leçon d'humilité. Il y a tellement d'auteurs qui viennent de partout que cela nous remet à notre vraie place. Quand je sors du Salon du livre, je suis vraiment redescendue sur terre.

Le travail de direction littéraire et d'édition

J.-D.C.: *Parvenez-vous à vivre de vos droits d'auteur?*

A.D.: Bien sûr que non. Je suis également directrice littéraire aux Éditions Pierre Tisseyre. Auparavant, j'étais directrice de plusieurs collections aux

***Nanook et Naoya, les oursons polaires**, de Angèle Delaunois, photographie par Fred Bruemmer (Héritage jeunesse)*

Éditions Héritage. Très peu d'écrivains parviennent actuellement à vivre de leur plume. Ceux qui ont 30 ou 40 titres à leur catalogue s'en tirent un peu mieux. Écrire est une vocation. Il ne faut pas s'embarquer là-dedans avec l'idée de devenir riche un jour. C'est une illusion!

J.-D.C.: *Étant donné que vous êtes directrice littéraire chez Pierre Tisseyre, pourriez-vous nous parler de votre travail?*

A.D.: Pierre Tisseyre a fondé sa maison d'édition il y a 50 ans; c'est une des plus anciennes au Canada. Monsieur Tisseyre était un classique. Il écrivait très bien, avec beaucoup d'élégance. Cette tradition de classicisme s'est poursuivie jusqu'à nos jours et je suis là pour la continuer. Cela me convient très bien d'ailleurs, car je considère qu'en littérature jeunesse, il y a eu passablement de laisser-aller ces dernières années. Je dirais qu'il faut remonter sensiblement le niveau et arrêter de prendre les enfants pour des imbéciles. Actuellement, la littérature jeunesse est visuellement très belle; mais disons que, concernant les textes, cela laisse parfois à désirer. Je ne crois pas que l'on doive écrire comme on parle. Je suis en réaction contre cette facilité.

Mon travail d'édition consiste à réceptionner les manuscrits. Je les fais circuler ensuite dans le comité de lecture qui fait le travail de déblayage. Puis, je lis les manuscrits qui me sont recommandés et je travaille avec les auteurs sélectionnés. Je choisis également les illustrateurs et je travaille avec eux. Il est très important qu'il y ait une belle chimie entre l'auteur et celui qui donne corps à ses personnages. Je m'implique aussi beaucoup dans la création d'outils pédagogiques efficaces pour faire entrer nos livres dans les classes.

J.-D.C.: *Combien y a-t-il de personnes dans le comité de lecture?*

A.D.: Il y en a trois, parfois quatre. Deux d'entre elles travaillent ensemble. Lorsqu'on ne parvient pas à obtenir un consensus au premier niveau, on fait circuler le manuscrit au deuxième niveau. Ensuite, il y a moi. J'essaie de donner une réponse aux auteurs à l'intérieur d'un délai de deux mois. Je trouve inadmissible que certains éditeurs fassent attendre leurs auteurs un an ou deux. Ce n'est pas rare. Même si le manuscrit n'est pas bon, il faut tenir compte de plusieurs choses. Quelqu'un qui prend la peine d'écrire un livre, de le dactylographier et de l'envoyer à un éditeur a droit au respect.

Le travail éditorial avec l'auteur est important. Il est rarissime qu'un manuscrit soit prêt immédiatement pour publication. Mon rôle consiste à donner une nouvelle vision du texte. Je travaille à la fois avec des critères objectifs (sur la forme) et avec des critères subjectifs (sur le fond). Il faut surveiller toutes les étapes de la production: les épreuves, les bleus[9], les couvertures, les communiqués de presse, le catalogue ... Tout cela est très complexe.

J.-D.C.: *Est-il déjà arrivé qu'un auteur refuse de retravailler son texte?*

A.D.: Oui, cela peut arriver. Je n'impose rien à l'auteur. Je lui fais des suggestions. Certains ne veulent pas retravailler les textes. C'est leur choix et ils ont le droit d'avoir une autre vision que la mienne. L'auteur a toujours le dernier mot. Je ne suis pas infaillible. Par contre, si je juge que sa version finale n'est pas d'un niveau suffisant, je me réserve le droit de la refuser. Il peut donc la récupérer et la faire publier ailleurs.

J.-D.C.: *Quels sont vos projets en tant que directrice littéraire?*

A.D.: Actuellement, je planifie la production littéraire de 1999. Nous prévoyons une trentaine de titres. L'échéancier est presque complet. Nous devons impérativement travailler six à huit mois à l'avance. Je suis contente d'avoir un peu de marge. Cela me permet de donner des délais plus confortables aux illustrateurs et aux auteurs.

J.-D.C.: *Vous semblez être très critique par rapport à ce qui se publie en littérature jeunesse.*

A.D.: J'ai la réputation d'être très perfectionniste. Certains livres ne devraient pas être publiés. Ils sont mal foutus. En littérature jeunesse, on voit actuellement des choses qui n'ont pas de sens. Pour le primaire, certains éditeurs ne publient que des livres écrits au présent. Une action qui se poursuit sur plusieurs semaines, plusieurs jours, doit être écrite au passé. Sinon, comment les enfants vont-ils apprendre à utiliser les temps du passé? Il y a aussi les phrases courtes: pas plus de sept mots, pas de propositions relatives, pas de mots difficiles. C'est réducteur au possible et on se retrouve avec des jeunes qui ont un vocabulaire appauvri, qui ne savent pas faire des phrases ou utiliser le vouvoiement.

On rencontre, en littérature jeunesse, le même phénomène que partout ailleurs. Le contenant est très beau, très soigné, mais le contenu laisse à

désirer. Nous vivons dans la société de l'apparence. C'est consternant de ne pas mettre les priorités aux bonnes places. Pourquoi aller toujours vers la facilité?

J.-D.C.: *Les professeurs qui veulent initier leurs élèves anglophones à la langue française ne devraient-ils pas disposer de livres écrits au présent parce qu'ils sont plus accessibles?*

A.D.: Je ne suis pas d'accord avec cela. Nous utilisons constamment les temps du passé, dans la conversation, à la radio, à la télévision, dans les journaux. Les anglophones doivent l'apprendre aussi. Il ne faut pas abaisser le niveau général parce qu'il y a quelques personnes qui ont de la difficulté à comprendre. Dans les classes d'immersion, il faut évidemment tenir compte du niveau de compréhension des élèves; mais c'est au professeur d'évaluer les besoins réels de sa classe et de faire des choix en conséquence. Beaucoup de matériel pédagogique leur est maintenant proposé et leur permet d'utiliser correctement les livres.

J.-D.C.: *Robert Soulières me mentionnait qu'il constatait une baisse des tirages en littérature jeunesse depuis quelques années. Faites-vous la même constatation?*

A.D.: Il y a plus d'éditeurs jeunesse qu'auparavant et, par le fait même, plus de publications. Il y a donc un fractionnement du marché. Il ne faut pas oublier non plus que l'espace d'entreposage des livres coûte cher. Avec les nouvelles techniques d'imprimerie, il est possible de réimprimer un livre dans un délai de deux à trois semaines. C'est ce qui explique que les tirages sont moins élevés. Chez Tisseyre, nous avons un fonds de classiques qui sont constamment réimprimés.

J.-D.C.: *Pourriez-vous nommer quelques titres?*

A.D.: *Le Don, Aller Retour, Le Visiteur du soir, Émilie de la Nouvelle Lune, Journal d'un rebelle*[10] ... pour ne citer que ceux-là.

J.-D.C.: *Avez-vous l'intention de produire des fiches pédagogiques chez Tisseyre?*

A.D.: Oui, c'est une nécessité, car nos livres sont encore trop peu nombreux dans les écoles. D'après une petite enquête que j'ai faite, dans 85 % des cas, les lectures obligatoires qui figurent sur les listes dans les écoles secondaires proviennent de France. Les professeurs nous réclament du matériel pédagogique qui leur permettra de travailler les livres dans leur classe. Nous allons donc commencer par la collection «Sésame». J'ai fait des essais avec *Les Trois Petits Sagouins* et ça marche très bien. Nous travaillons dans le même sens que les professeurs. Ces fiches leur permettent de dégager du temps et de l'utiliser à autre chose.

J.-D.C.: *Tout cela dans le but de combler la faille dont vous nous avez parlé précédemment?*

A.D.: Exactement. Ces cahiers pédagogiques sont complets. Il y a des activités avant, pendant et après la lecture. Ils disent comment utiliser le livre, comment gérer les personnages, comment faire comprendre les mots ou les pas-

sages difficiles, comment s'assurer que l'enfant a bien compris le déroulement de l'histoire. Ils doivent être mignons et amusants. On permet au professeur de photocopier les pages et de choisir telle ou telle activité. Les enfants écrivent directement sur les pages. Ainsi, ils n'auront plus à trimballer des tonnes de matériel dans leur cartable. Tout le monde y gagne.

J.-D.C.: *La courte échelle est un acteur important dans le champ de la littérature jeunesse. Comment expliqueriez-vous cela?*

A.D.: Il s'agit d'un marketing très intelligent. J'ai déjà entendu Bertrand Gauthier dire que pour chaque dollar investi dans l'édition, il fallait investir un dollar dans la publicité. À la longue, ce raisonnement s'est avéré très payant. La courte échelle a une bonne longueur d'avance. Tout le monde essaie de les rattraper.

J.-D.C.: *Les Éditions Héritage sont un autre joueur important.*

A.D.: Oui. C'est une autre approche, davantage familiale, je dirais. Chez Héritage, on fait beaucoup de traductions et d'achats de droits étrangers. Chaque maison d'édition a ses particularités.

J.-D.C.: *Vous êtes également publiée chez Soulières Éditeur?*

A.D.: C'est exact, j'ai publié *La Chèvre de Monsieur Potvin* chez Soulières. J'ai également publié chez Stanké. J'ai aussi un texte accepté chez HMH qui va être publié l'été prochain en coédition avec Hachette en France. Chez Tisseyre, j'ai publié *Les Trois Petits Sagouins* et *La Tempête du siècle*[11]. (Je trouvais que cette tempête de verglas que nous avons subie dans la région de Montréal nous avait amené des problèmes d'éthique et de comportements sociaux sur lesquels il fallait revenir). Je préfère publier chez plusieurs éditeurs.

J.-D.C.: *Pouvez-vous nous parler de la relation avec l'éditeur, vous qui avez une expérience substantielle dans ce domaine?*

A.D.: Il y a des relations plus chaleureuses que d'autres. Les éditeurs ne respectent pas tous leurs auteurs de la même façon. Sans citer de noms, bien des auteurs (dont je suis) ont eu des problèmes avec les stocks de livres et avec les redevances qui leur étaient dûes. Il se produit parfois des choses bizarres. On nous dit que les stocks sont épuisés, mais si nous regardons bien nos chiffres de vente, nous constatons que plusieurs centaines d'exemplaires se sont volatilisés dans la nature. Pilonnés, soldés dans certains cas. Rares sont les éditeurs qui prennent la peine d'en aviser les auteurs alors que le contrat les y oblige. Il faut être très vigilant. Ces détails gâchent parfois les relations entre les écrivains et leurs éditeurs. Je ne suis pas certaine que tous les éditeurs sont conscients que, sans les écrivains, ils seraient tous au chômage. Quelques-uns considèrent leurs auteurs comme de simples pigistes, sans plus.

J.-D.C.: *Selon vous, la littérature jeunesse québécoise reçoit-elle la même reconnaissance institutionnelle que la littérature adulte?*

A.D.: Sûrement pas. Vous n'avez qu'à regarder les suppléments littéraires de *La Presse* ou du *Devoir*. Il y a très peu de critiques en littérature de jeunesse. Ceux-ci accomplissent une tâche extraordinaire, mais on ne leur accorde pas l'espace dont ils auraient besoin pour réaliser un travail vraiment exhaustif. Pourtant, la littérature jeunesse représente plus du tiers du marché des livres. Constatez! Nous sommes loin d'avoir le tiers de l'espace consacré à la littérature dans les médias.

La littérature jeunesse n'est pas reconnue à sa juste valeur. Il y a une raison à cela. Le phénomène de la littérature jeunesse est assez récent. Il n'a pas plus de trente ans. Avant, il n'y avait pas (ou très peu) de littérature jeunesse. Il y avait des gens qui écrivaient des contes classiques, la plupart du temps assez cruels. La littérature jeunesse actuelle s'est développée, disons, dans les années 60-70. Elle est maintenant très dynamique et très vivante. Au Québec, malgré certaines critiques que j'ai émises tout à l'heure, nous avons une longueur d'avance sur tout le reste du monde francophone. Je sais de quoi je parle. C'est pourquoi il est dommage que la part qui nous est faite dans les médias soit si microscopique par rapport à l'impact que nous avons auprès du public. Notre rôle est important puisque nous avons la responsabilité de former les lecteurs de demain. Et Dieu sait qu'il y a de bons auteurs au Québec!

J.-D.C.: *Est-ce contradictoire de produire des œuvres d'art et d'avoir une préoccupation avouée à rechercher un certain profit?*

A.D.: Non, je ne trouve pas. Personne ne vit de l'air du temps. Si nous faisons les choses en accord avec notre conscience, si nous sommes respectueux de notre travail et sincères, pourquoi ne devrions-nous pas en retirer un profit quelconque? Personnellement, je n'ai pas de problèmes avec ça. Et laissez-moi rajouter que les créateurs sont presque toujours ceux qui ramassent la plus petite part.

J.-D.C.: *Peut-on à la fois faire de la critique et de la création?*

A.D.: Oui, je crois que toute forme de création doit s'accompagner d'une autocritique. Il est également important d'accepter les critiques des autres. Pour moi, un bon critique est celui qui a des connaissances différentes des miennes, un vécu autre, et qui réinvente mon travail avec sa propre personnalité. Il me donne donc une nouvelle lecture de mon œuvre. Lorsque nous posons le geste de publier un livre, celui-ci nous échappe complètement. Il appartient aux autres, comme un enfant qui se met à voler de ses propres ailes. En tant qu'auteur, nous n'avons plus de contrôle sur ce qui va se passer.

Bien entendu, il y a des critiques complètement négatives, des règlements de comptes par articles interposés. C'est difficile à avaler, mais il faut les prendre pour ce qu'ils sont. Cependant, à partir du moment où celui qui me critique est sincère, je ne vois pas pourquoi je n'accepterais pas son

opinion. Je fais moi-même des restrictions par rapport à ce que j'écris et par rapport à ce qu'écrivent les auteurs que je dirige ... alors je peux comprendre qu'on en fasse également sur ma production[12].

Notes

1 *Variations sur un même «t'aime»*, Saint-Lambert, Dominique et Compagnie (Héritage), coll. «Échos», 1997, 156 p.

2 Le Salon du livre était tenu du 19 au 24 novembre 1998 à la Place Bonaventure.

3 *Kotik-Le bébé phoque* et *Nanook et Naoya-Les oursons polaires*, photographies de Fred Bruemmer, Saint-Lambert, Héritage jeunesse, coll. «Histoire vraie», 1995, 48 p. Les ouvrages sont épuisés et ne seront pas réimprimés.

4 Rappelons que le Prix du Gouverneur général du Canada est doté d'une bourse de 10 000$.

5 *La Chèvre de Monsieur Potvin*, Saint-Lambert, Soulières éditeur, coll. «Ma petite vache a mal aux pattes», 1997, 61 p.

6 *Baby-boom blues*, Montréal, Stanké, 1997, 220 p.

7 *Les Trois Petits Sagouins*, Saint-Laurent, Éditions Pierre Tisseyre, coll. «Sésame», 1998, 71 p.

8 Lire l'article de Lucie Papineau, «Avril ... le mois du délire! Ou les auteurs et illustrateurs sur la côte Ouest», *Lurelu*, automne 1998, vol. 21, n° 2, p. 61-62.

9 Terme désignant la dernière version avant l'impression.

10 *Yves Beauchesne et David Schinkel, Le Don*, Montréal, Éditions Pierre Tisseyre, coll. «Conquêtes», 1987, 234 p.; Yves Beauchesne et David Schinkel, *Aller Retour*, Montréal, Éditions Pierre Tisseyre, coll. «Conquêtes», 1986, 144 p.; Robert Soulières, *Le Visiteur du soir*, Montréal, Éditions Pierre Tisseyre, coll. «Conquêtes», 1980, 147 p.; Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Émilie de la Nouvelle Lune*, traduit de l'anglais par Paule Daveluy, Montréal, Éditions Pierre Tisseyre, coll. «Des deux Solitudes, jeunesse», 1983 (1998), 4 tomes.; William Bell, *Journal d'un rebelle*, traduit de l'anglais par Paule Daveluy, Montréal, Éditions Pierre Tisseyre, coll. «Des deux Solitudes, jeunesse», 1994, 274 p.

11 *La Tempête du siècle*, Saint-Laurent, Éditions Pierre Tisseyre, coll. «Papillon», 1998, 146 p.

12 Parmi les critiques de *Variations sur un même «t'aime»*, mentionnons Anonyme, «L'amour avant l'âge», *Le Devoir*, les samedi 14 et dimanche 15 février 1998, p. D-1. Gisèle Desroches, «Angèle Delaunois, *Variations sur un même «t'aime»*, *Lurelu*, Printemps-été 1998, vol. 21, n° 1, p. 28. Jean-Denis Côté, «Ah! L'amour, l'amour ...», *Québec français*, été 1998, n° 110, p. 107-108. Le lecteur attentif observera que l'ordre alphabétique n'est pas respecté, et ce, au profit de la courtoisie.

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*Responses to "An Interview with Welwyn Wilton Katz" by Marianne Micros (**CCL**, summer 1998, no. 90, vol. 24:2)*

Résumé: *L'entrevue de Welwyn Wilton Katz publiée dans la* ***CCL/LCJ*** *a soulevé une longue polémique dont nous reproduisons ici les interventions les plus substantielles. Il faut rappeler que, durant l'entrevue accordée à M. Micros, W.W. Katz remettait en cause le bien-fondé des commentaires sur ses oeuvres de deux critiques, C. Hoogland et A. Kertzer, et le travail de leur éditeur, P. Nodelman, qui avaient participé à un précédent numéro de la* ***CCL/LCJ****. Nous donnons ici leurs répliques et les notes rectificatives de M. Micros et W.W. Katz. Ces interventions font ressortir le difficile rapport entre l'écrivain et ses interprètes, et la délicate question de l'influence des critiques sur la carrière et la réputation des auteurs.*

Summary: *We begin this section with the responses of three scholars, Cornelia Hoogland, Adrienne Kertzer, and Perry Nodelman, to the interview with Welwyn Wilton Katz. Hoogland's and Kertzer's scholarship, which appeared in earlier issues of* ***CCL****, was discussed in the interview, and Nodelman guest-edited the issue in which Hoogland's article appeared. We then give you Marianne Micros's and Welwyn Wilton Katz's responses to these scholars' responses. At stake here are issues of authorial intent, aesthetic distance, the appropriateness of a particular critical orientation with respect to a text, and the degree to which a critic must consider not only the text and its cultural context but the author's developing reputation and livelihood.*

What's Sacred in Children's Literature?: Hoogland's Response

• *Cornelia Hoogland* •

In my practice and scholarship of children's literature I value both literary discussion and criticism. Whether I am reading stories to five-year-old Sage, conducting a class at the University of Western Ontario, reading for pleasure or writing my own stories, for me enjoyment and criticism are intertwined. As a writer of poetry, children's stories, and plays for young audiences, I am no stranger to criticism. I have enough rejection slips and book reviews to paper my study. I am uninterested in unfairly discrediting Canadian writers — I'm in this business and know its difficulties. And as Iris Murdoch instructed, art is of the first order. But there's no sense in kidding ourselves. Important writers are those who are in dialogue with their society, or at least with their literary community. Given the marginalization of children's literature, most writers welcome informed discussion of their books. I'm surprised to learn that this does not seem true about a successful writer like W.W. Katz. Canadian writers of children's literature can play a central role in the ongoing discourse of our times, and many are doing so brilliantly.

Katz's antagonism toward informed discussion of her books appears in a *CCL* interview (*CCL*, summer, 1998, no. 90, vol. 24:2), conducted by M. Micros, entitled "My Books Are My Children: An Interview With Welwyn Wilton Katz." There both she and Micros discredit my academic inquiry. Let me start with the scholarship that seems to have prompted the interview. In my article, "Constellations of Identity in Canadian Young Adult Novels" (*CCL*, summer, 1997, no. 86, vol. 23:2) I explore, among other questions, how characters in three novels make decisions. What decisions do they make? What is the complexity of those decisions? How are the characters positioned in relation to their problems? Are the characters asked to choose between one option or another — that is, are the problems and their solutions presented as black and white? Or do the solutions (to problems centred on membership in such diverse activities as sports groups or native communities) uphold complexity and contradiction? This discussion is set in the context of what it means to be Canadian, and the pressures to choose iden-

tity along cultural and national lines. I ask whether there is among writers "an attempt to reveal the complexity and heterogeneity of our culture, to oppose hierarchical organization, and to expose racism and sexism where it occurs?" (29). To answer this question, I examine Katz's *False Face* and *Out of the Dark* and Diana Wieler's *Bad Boy*. Among much else, I argue, for example, that in *False Face* Katz raises the important topic of cultural continuity. While I applaud her for tackling complex subjects, I critique her treatment of the topic. The native reserve Katz creates dichotomizes native and white and perpetuates the idea of cultural purity. This creates a false impression of the inhabitants and the culture of the reserve. The two people that the main character Tom meets there clearly state that the reserve is available only to people who are 100 percent native, and thus unavailable to Tom who is métis. Tensions — racial, cultural — must co-exist if writers are to portray the complexities of situations and decision-making within those situations. As I stated in my article, "In creating a distinctly pure (albeit negative) environment, Katz disallows tensions which need to be voiced" (33). It's Katz's prerogative to create the reserve she imagines exists, but I believe that unless its tensions are voiced, readers lose the opportunity to face "the challenges to which native Canadians as well as non-native Canadians need to respond" (33). For most people, the days of a single-perspective, objective world are over. Writers must write out of a plurality of consciousness; that is, they must engage in literary discussion that sustains the contradictions and tensions that lie at the heart of relations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples if young Canadian readers are to gain such a consciousness. Call this notion my "post-modernist's attempt to deconstruct ... into political statements," "a politically correct social study," or simply "a whisper campaign ... started against this child [fictional Tom]," or what you will. The point is that in Katz's novel his reserve, and thus his native heritage, is denied Tom. He's expelled because he's white. This exclusive viewpoint goes unchallenged.

As part of my discussion of *Out of the Dark* I challenge Ben's unexpected change of heart that occurs in one paragraph, one thought process: "He embraces his father's heritage without reflection, after one hundred and seventy-five pages of reflection on why he should not do so. Unquestioning uniformity is as problematic here as it is in *False Face*" (36). Ben accepts not only his former enemies as friends, but also gives up his own pursuits such as Norse mythology, accepts the new home over the old, his father's preference in colour over his own. In this one-paragraph shift, belonging means assimilation. This is an unhelpful notion to present to young people who are trying to negotiate complex lives. For my discussion of the ways in which Wieler manages to keep a writerly eye on complexity and contradiction, please revisit my article, "Constellations of Identity" referenced above.

Katz's objections to my article seem to be based on my politics, or what she describes as "the ammunition that goes with their own agenda"

(57). The Micros interview alludes to critics like me who deconstruct Katz's books into "political statements" and who, according to Micros, critique Katz's book into a "politically correct social study" (53). The criticisms against me are difficult to defend because they are unsupported generalizations. Terms such as "political" and "politically correct," applied to my work, are not defined in the interview, making the piece read more as invective than as analysis or exploration. Nevertheless, I will attempt to provide reasons for my objections to the content and form of the interview.

First, in the interview, Katz speaks persuasively about her use of point of view in her writing and in her critiquing of other books. However, while she claims this literary convention as her right and obviously her delight, she says that "most readers, and especially children, read a story from beginning to end, and as far as I know, don't interrupt themselves to think upon topics such as divorce, race, point of view, etc." (51). This approach to reading strikes me as anti-intellectual, condescending toward child readers, and frankly baffling. What does Katz think teachers do in language arts and English classes? Thinking about a novel's point of view is, as Katz claims for herself ("I thought long and hard about point of view" [56, 57]), one of the literary tools that provides reading and writing pleasure. Should only Katz appreciate, understand and manipulate point of view?

Second, I object to Katz collapsing motherhood and art, and claiming special status as a writer. Katz wants her readers and critics to have the same intense, motherly love for her characters that she has. An apparent remedy for critics like me is to "become Ben, to cry for him as I [Katz] did," "to forget for a brief space of time that she's [I'm] a professor teaching the book or a literary critic judging the book" (52). She accuses critics of defaming and unfairly attacking her child characters in the public press, of perpetuating whisper campaigns against them, of creating a portrait of the child characters as politically incorrect. If Ben and Tom are indeed fictional characters, such "attacks" are futile. I may not agree with something a literary character does, but my criticism is not of his actions, nor is it a value judgment of the artist. Rather, literary criticism is interested in the form as well as in the portrayal of context, characters, and the issues characters face.

Third, I object to Micros prompting Katz in her interview question. She says "you [Katz] are not doing a politically correct social study, you are writing a novel. It contains feeling, and sometimes the feelings of flawed individuals. It is unfortunate when readers and critics do not realize that" (51). Then, further on, she applauds Katz for saying that very thing. The example Micros offers of her classroom disturbs me with its comparison of students "jump[ing] up from the audience and interrupt[ing] him [the speaker] to the 'attack' of literary critics" (51). I am devoted to becoming a better reader and writer through public and private conversations with the books I read. I do not interrupt speakers, nor writers, nor other critics. I want

to hear what others have to say, fully anticipating that they want to hear my ideas. As I understand the situations of both scholarly writing and the classroom, the objective of critic and teacher is to encourage dialogue and to model civil disagreement, not to silence it.

Fourth, I object to Katz's and Micros's repeated implication that emotional responses to a work be divorced from intellectual consideration. Within reader-response theory, a feeling-response is one that provides important critical information to the reader. The position that both women take suggests that readers are not to read books differently from the ways their authors intended them to be read. Readers are not to do anything, it seems, but enjoy and appreciate. Katz insists that discussion of her books occur on a feeling level only, and furthermore, on the terms of "her" feelings.

Finally and most importantly, Katz acknowledges the sacredness of the native themes with which she deals in *False Face*, yet dismisses them when she says that "there is no way to let such issues into a book if you leave out everything that is sacred to somebody" (58). She says this while demanding special exemption from criticism for herself as a writer. (For example, she remarks on her suffering at the hands of critics when her fictional characters are "unfairly attacked or treated with disdain, or worse" ... "torn to pieces and bits of them taken to build some other person's theory about me [Katz]" [64].) It appears that for some Canadians fictional characters are sacred, while for others Canada's first and oldest cultural and spiritual traditions are sacred.

I conclude "Constellations of Identity" by saying that we need to "keep talking": "As creators of our symbolic systems we must use and interpret them in ways that reflect, in form and content, what we believe and value. Through comparison and contrast we come to know both others and ourselves, but the quality of our reflection on these differences will determine the depth of our understanding" (40). *CCL*, its writers and readers, need to keep the conversation going at a level of quality that, as Katz says, takes "children's literature ... seriously" (65).

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My Children Are My Children; Her Books Are My Work

• *Adrienne Kertzer* •

In an article "Mad Voices: The Mothers of Welwyn Wilton Katz," that I wrote in 1993, an article that was published two years later by *CCL*, I argued that powerful maternal voices exist, but that a culture that suspects such voices often contains them by labelling them mad. That article was written a long time ago when I spent a sabbatical researching maternal voices in children's books. Now on another sabbatical, writing on another aspect of children's books, I find reference to the article in an interview that is published in *CCL* 90.

Although I am sure that if I were to write "Mad Voices" now, there would be things that I would change, I find much in it that I still stand by including my sense that Welwyn Wilton Katz is both an interesting writer whose work merits academic discussion and one who is particularly interested in maternal voices. This conviction is confirmed not only by the quotation that appears in the title of Marianne Micros's interview with Katz, "'My Books Are My Children': An Interview with Welwyn Wilton Katz," and the maternal language that figures so remarkably in the interview, but also by the wonderful way Katz states how initially she couldn't finish reading my article, "it seemed so nonsensical" (60). As I said in the article, the best way to dismiss someone's words is to say that she is speaking in the discourse of madness.

In my article I focus on four novels by Katz: *Sun God, Moon Witch, False Face, Whalesinger*, and *Come Like Shadows*. Notwithstanding the aggressive, at times cannibalistic, imagery, e.g., "meat to be torn to pieces and devoured" (57) that appears in the interview every time academic writers are mentioned, I focus on these four novels by Katz, not because I murder to dissect, but, as I say in the article, because Katz is "a particularly interesting example of a contemporary woman novelist, incessantly returning to a subject that is not only problematized by general cultural anxieties about powerful mothers' voices but by the particular expectations we have concerning point of view

in the adolescent novel." My scholarly interest lies in the narrative expectations of different forms of writing; I am not at all interested in "picking apart" a writer, and strongly believe that life is too short to waste my time writing about writers whose work I do not respect. I also do not think that the article's basic premise is proved wrong by the interview, and to critique my argument by discussing mothers who appear in later fiction by Katz is itself not fair, particularly since I conclude that "*Whalesinger* signals a major change in Katz's discourse of madness" and *Come Like Shadows* offers an even "more sympathetic and complex" treatment of maternal figures.

But what really intrigues me in the interview and drives me to write is the opposition between Katz's insistence that her "characters are *individuals*, not *universal types*" (63), and her constant reference to the publication-obsessed academics who tear apart her work, obviously never read for pleasure, and have forgotten the emotions involved in writing fiction. As someone who has never before been regarded as either trendy or politically correct, who was in my article working against the clichés about mothers in the oh-so-trendy Freud and Lacan, I can't help thinking that interviews too can be deconstructed. Marianne Micros identifies herself as a writer who longs for a better way to bring "literature for young readers into fields of academic studies" (57). Under what terms this will happen is unclear given both the interview and the model provided by a review that Micros writes elsewhere in the same issue of *CCL*. According to Katz, the few of us who do take "children's literature ... seriously" (65) have too much power: "the opinions of the very few of them that are critical of my books are given far more weight than they ought to carry" (65). Power? That subject I wrote about? In calling her books her children, and lamenting the power of misguided critics, isn't Katz defending her maternal right to speak, her right to her own maternal power to give birth? (Don't blame me for this metaphor; I'm just reading the interview.) And doesn't she state that those misguided critics have destroyed her willingness to speak? But isn't that conflictual model of speaking (young adult vs. mother, writer vs. critic) the subject of my essay? I'd laugh with delight, only it's hard to, given my "grimly held academic theories" (64).

Micros tells us that such critics have "*lost the pleasure of reading*" (65). The anti-intellectual bias of assuming that the pleasure of the text excludes the analysis of the text is something that Katz does not subscribe to herself when she speaks of her own analysis of children's books. But Micros certainly seems committed to this view, one parallel to the way she opposes the child and adult in her review of Sandra Birdsell's *The Town That Floated Away*. Curiouser and curiouser; in the very same issue that Mavis Reimer talks about how cultures construct "the child," Micros in her review depicts analysis as a temptation that the adult really should resist out of respect for "the child" who hasn't the slightest interest in such analysis. So it seems necessary to say that when I read Katz's books with pleasure because they have ideas worth discussing, I am not subscribing to Micros's model of read-

ing in which the pleasure is somehow separate from and vulnerable to any analysis.

One of the clichés about mothers is that some of us identify too much with our children, and I think that this is painfully evident in the interview. I sincerely regret if Katz views my article as contributing to silencing her work whereas I regard it as participating in a public discussion of a writer whose work I would never describe as nonsense. I do not question Katz's right to her own views, e.g. that "Feminism has no place in my writing" (62), but to move from there to a refusal of a feminist reading of her work is truly a fantasy about a writer's power to control the reading of her books. Just as Katz in her fiction responds to other writers and does not simply reproduce them (i.e. *Come Like Shadows* is a response to, not a reproduction of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*), academic scholars respond to writers. That is part of the pleasure of reading and writing.

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My Own False Face: A Response to Marianne Micros's Interview with Welwyn Wilton Katz

• *Perry Nodelman* •

I feel the need to respond to Marianne Micros' interview of Welwyn Katz simply because it touches on so many different parts of my own life — and because much of what Katz and Micros agree on, if true, would have the effect of rather drastically separating those parts of me from each other, making me as painfully divided a creature as any of Katz's own compellingly conflicted characters. And yet I don't, in fact, feel that conflicted or that torn — or perhaps more accurately, I do, and I rejoice in it. Let me explain.

I am, like Katz, a writer of children's fiction, and I share her feelings of irritation and anguish when readers, particularly adult critics, see things in my books I believe I didn't put there — especially things that, were they indeed present, would clearly proclaim my own personal lack of moral character. Katz reports her distress over Cornelia Hoogland's reading of her novels, a reading that sees the novels as establishing sets of binary opposites and enforcing choices amongst them in a way that "disallows tensions which need to be voiced" (Hoogland 33). I felt an exactly equivalent distress when, just after my picture book *Alice Falls Apart* first came out, my publishers reported to me that a bookstore manager had refused to stock it. The book is about a girl having a bad day, the kind of day in which you feel you're just *falling* to pieces. The device of the book is that Alice does literally fall apart, and then has to cope with a large crowd of her different quarrelling selves (much as Micros and Katz's comments imply I ought to be warring with myself — I sense a theme developing here). The bookstore manager in question saw something much darker afoot. She was convinced that Alice was a clear example of multiple personality disorder — and since that disease is the result of sexual abuse, decided the book was inappropriate for young readers.

And then, just last week, a colleague told me that some of the university students studying my novel *The Same Place But Different* in his children's

fiction course objected to the moment when my young hero Johnny Nesbit responds with some noticeable enthusiasm as Jenny Greenteeth, a fairy enchantress, directs her charms toward him. They said that my letting this young male teenager get excited by a beautiful, sexy woman obviously meant that I, the author, was a dirty old man. Dirty, perhaps — but old? Me? I understand why Katz might worry that, "when a book is labelled 'politically incorrect,' then the *author* will be branded with the same words" (57).

Nevertheless, I am also a critic — exactly the kind of critic whom Micros describes as "an adult academic, who, reading against the intended reader, reads the book ... as a sociological map" (57), and whom Katz describes as "reading a book through a particular lens, or theory" (57). Katz goes on to suggest that this sort of reading is an act by academics of "destroying the part of the book that had once been alive," of "bringing to it [the book] the ammunition that goes with their own agenda" (57), and of looking "at books as meat to be torn to pieces and destroyed" (57). I dislike and reject these images of mayhem and butchery. I understand that deconstruction is not, as Katz says, "destruction," but an effort to become aware of the constructed nature of texts, the ways in which they work rhetorically to persuade us, not always beneficially, about who we are and what world we live in. Furthermore, I've just reread Katz's *False Face* and *Out of the Dark*, and am happy to report that, despite Hoogland and Kertzer's artillery, and despite or possibly even because of my perceptions of their constructedness, they remain very much alive — powerfully so. But I can't deny that in my hundred-or-so articles about children's books, I've often had negative things to say; and many of the negative things had to do with my perceptions of political and ideological content of which writers may or may not have been aware. What Katz and Micros call "sociology" I call necessary and important analysis.

I am, then, both the good guy and the bad guy here, both a besieged author in sympathy with another besieged author and a besieging critic in agreement, I must admit, with the besieging critics in question, Cornelia Hoogland and Adrienne Kertzer. For, as much as I empathize with Katz, I believe both Hoogland and Kertzer have valuable and important insights into her work. I'll explain why later.

Meanwhile: I was, in fact, the guest editor of the issue of *CCL* in which Hoogland's article appeared. In other words, I was one of the academics who reviewed and decided to publish this critical description of the ways in which two of Katz's books seem to be reinforcing polarized oppositions rather than suggesting less divisive ways of negotiating between them. I was also, however, one of the three judges of the Groundwood International Fiction contest — personally responsible, therefore, for the fact that *False Face*, one of the novels by Katz in question, won this important prize. And in addition to seeing the justice of some of Hoogland's and Kertzer's criticisms

of this book, I have to admit that I also, still, greatly admire it. It is, as I said, a powerful book — and so is *Out of the Dark*.

In *False Face*, Katz's character Laney views one of the Iroquois masks of the title as "black for hate, red for love, the thin line dividing the two" (68) and Laney's friend Tom thinks of "Black and red opposing one another, evil and good together" (78). In terms of the clear divisions Micros and Katz establish between writers and academic critics, between those who write and read books for pleasure and those who are hostile and academic and analytical and theoretical, I ought myself to be much like that mask, a singularly divided entity with a thin but clear demarcation between my warring parts: Perry Falls Apart. In fact, I don't feel the least bit at war with myself. The novelist in me, being me, does not revile the work of the critic. The critic, being me also, may disagree with the negative or, in my opinion, uncomprehending comments of some readers of my novels, but does not wish them to be silent or to silence them. The me who is both these people delights in a world which allows him to be both, equally values both, and sees great merit in the ongoing dialogue between them. Towards the end of *False Face*, Laney thinks of "the black and the red, the hating and the loving, two savage eternal halves struggling beneath the civilized appearances" (149). I accept the equivalent eternity of the division between writer and critic in myself, but I see it neither as savage nor even as much of a struggle—more like a friendly and productive conversation.

Let me, then, outline what the critic in me understands about his part in this conversation — and why he rejects the warfare between academic theorist and novelist that both Micros and Katz tend to take for granted.

Micros bases her opposition to "critics who read books as if they were sociological documents" (57) on the fact that such readings are "against the intended reader" (57). Katz says, "I would like my reader to forget for a brief space of time that she's a professor teaching the book or a literary critic judging the book as to its political correctness or interpreting it in the light of the newest theory. I want readers to *become* Ben [the protagonist of *Out of the Dark*], to cry for him as I did" (52). What unites these two positions is the conviction that the critic's business is, primarily and exclusively, what authors intend to have happen when readers read their books. I reject this idea for a number of reasons.

The first of these has to do with authority — perhaps, even, parental authority. Katz tells us that she thinks of her character Ben as a son: "what I am saying is that I love Ben the way any mother who gives birth to a child loves that child. I did give birth to him ... and I understand him deep to his core ..." (52). As a novelist, I share the feeling that bringing a book into the world is something like having a child (although I can't say I feel anything like a father to my characters, who are too much like me for me to wish or imagine myself their parent — what a horror story!). But I find myself desper-

ately resisting the idea that I absolutely understand my novels or the characters in them, any more than I absolutely understand the real human beings I have fathered. Those people, now adults, are deeply (and delightfully) mysterious to me — separate beings in their own right, people who often act against my expectations, even, sometimes, my wishes, and who have effects on others that surprise me. And I think it would be blind of me to imagine that they weren't mysterious, that they were, indeed, exactly what I intended them to be when I tried to help shape their values and work habits in their younger years. If I ever did have the authority to impose my view on them in that way, I no longer have it now.

Nor do I want that authority. As I read Katz's description of her maternal feelings for her characters—and later in the interview, for her books — I remembered a famous comment of Northrop Frye's:

> ... poems, like poets, are born and not made. The poet's task is to deliver the poem in as uninjured a state as possible, and if the poem is alive, it is equally anxious to be rid of him, and screams to be cut loose from his private memories and associations, his desire for self-expression, and all the other navel-strings and feeding tubes of his ego. The critic takes over where the poet leaves off.... (11)

As a writer of fiction, I work hard to make a book do what I want it to do — have the effect I intend and hope it will have on my future readers. In much the same way, I spent a lot of time as a parent of still-developing children working to help them become the kind of honourable, thoughtful, energetic human beings I hoped they might become. But my understanding of my role as a parent was primarily that I was working hard to put myself out of business — to end up with people who didn't need parenting, didn't need me to protect them or care for them or explain them to others because they could do all that for themselves. Similarly, I believe, once a book is published it's cut loose from me and my control of it. I don't like it when others misunderstand it, any more than I like the ways in which other human beings mistreat or misunderstand my actual children now that they've left the security and protection of the home I provided for them. But I know in both cases that there's nothing much I can do about it, that my own words about my books or my children are really not any more authoritative than anybody else's — that when I talk about them I'm just another voice in the conversation about them. All I can do is hope that I did my job well, and that both books and children are strong enough to defend themselves against any of the slings and arrows that are bound to head in their direction.

I also know it's a good thing there isn't much I can do about it. After I've done with them, my books belong to my readers — all books do, surely, once they're published. Their readers are all different people, and will inevitably read the books in different ways — many of those ways at odds with

my own understandings of them. Reader-response theory reveals how very much the text of a novel is merely a recipe — instructions that allow readers to make a novel happen as they engage with the text. Just as cooks understand "a dash of Worcestershire sauce" in terms of their previous cooking experience, readers follow the instructions of a text by filling its inevitable gaps — the information it evokes but doesn't actually provide — in terms of their own personal repertoire of knowledge and experience. A dash for me might be a surfeit for you. While we all read the same words in a text, then— say, for instance, the phrase "academic puzzles" in the poem by Barbara Novak that Katz quotes at the beginning of *False Face*—we all understand them in terms of our own situation. Some readers will read "academic puzzles" as meaning dry and lifeless and deathly, as I suspect Novak intended; but being myself an academic and a person who derives great pleasure from thinking things through, I read "academic puzzles" as a promise of joyful excitement and valuable understanding and insight.

I do, of course, realize that Novak didn't want or expect that response. I see how she intended her poem to be about how dangerous it is to expose and analyse the secrets of the heart. That's exactly what offends me: if I read these words of hers in terms of my own repertoire, as I inevitably must, then I have to realize that Novak is simply taking it for granted that something I greatly enjoy and believe to be life-affirming, something central to my very being, is an act of murder. I do not wish to forget my annoyance about that — it's more important to me than Novak's intentions, and I believe it ought to be more important.

We readers are individual human beings with individual human feelings and human responses, and we read best when we read in terms of those feelings and responses — when we let ourselves engage authentically with the texts we read. To try to blot out our selves and become some strangely nonexistent (and non-human) "intended reader," as Micros seems to be demanding, would be not only unauthentic, but strangely detached and uninvolving. It's not the kind of reading I would wish for my own novels. I want my readers to read them in terms of exactly the people they are — to enter into their own real dialogues with my books even if it means they end up with the judgment that I'm a dirty old man. What Katz sees as novels being "torn to pieces and bits of them taken to build some other person's theory" (64) I see as merely a negative way of describing a positive act. Reading in terms of "some other person's theory" is what we always do when we read, and what we always ought to be doing. We necessarily read in terms of our own personal beliefs and principles, including the theories of others we are persuaded by and committed to, as Hoogland is clearly and passionately committed to the ideas of Edward Said.

There is, perhaps, a paradox here. Katz says that she'd like her reader "to forget for a brief space of time that she is a professor reading a book"

exactly because what she wants from readers is not detachment, but involvement: "I want a reader to *become* Ben." She might, then, argue, that people like me and the professor of this sentence of hers are, because of our dangerously academic modes of thought, our commitment to theory, bound to be unfortunately detached rather than correctly involved. Because of the kind of person I am and the kind of responses I do genuinely have, what I call being personally involved in the text — reading as who I am — comes to be viewed as an act of non-involvement.

But for me, the salient fact is that, in order to be involved in the way Katz would like, the professor and I would have, as she says, to "forget" who we are; we could only become involved by dis-involving and disenfranchising ourselves. We adults cannot read children's books by becoming children simply because we are not children, and because we cannot actually know how children or anybody else but ourselves might actually read anything. Pretending otherwise is not a good idea for any reader.

Consider, for instance, a non-academic young reader of aboriginal background. In *False Face*, as young Tom flees in terror from the horror of the mask, Katz says, "He was all Indian now, an Iroquois fleeing for his life" (25). I think I know what she intends — that Tom, who is usually confused about his half-white, half-aboriginal background, acts here purely in terms of his absolute faith in the dark power of the mask. But I wouldn't be surprised if a young reader who had been on the receiving end of a whole range of all-too-common prejudices against natives felt hurt by the idea that the act of fleeing from danger rather than facing it is what defines someone as Indian and not white. Should that happen, I believe that young reader would be entitled to his reading, entitled to refuse to "become" Tom, entitled to his feelings of hurt or anger and entitled to express them, no matter how far at odds they are with the intentions of the author of the book.

But I'm not the author whose intentions are being ignored here. Maybe I'm being too easy on myself. Consider, then, one of my own young readers. I was in a grade six classroom, reading from my novel *Behaving Bradley*, in which a boy gets involved in his high school's efforts to develop a code of conduct. At one point in the book, Brad goes around the school gathering suggestions from other students about what to put in the code; the section I read to the class was the list of suggestions he gathers, a list that reveals the bad conduct of just about everybody, including the suggesters. The grade six students laughed at the list, as I hoped they would. But afterwards, an African-Canadian girl came up to me and asked why I'd put in the part about somebody suggesting that a boy in grade nine stop calling people "Pakis and Jungle Bunnies." I told her that I wanted the book to be like reality, and that, unfortunately, people really did use these words. I assured her that Bradley himself was upset by it and clearly said so in the

book — and so was I. In other words, I intended this to be an attack on racist language, not an approval of it.

But I could tell from the look on the girl's face that that wasn't enough. She had found the language hurtful, and that was all that really mattered to her. And I still have to say, she was entitled to her hurt. It was real. It matters. If I work with the hope that readers really will engage themselves with what I write, really become involved with it in personal terms, then I have to accept engagements that I didn't really want and don't personally like. I even have to allow the responses of readers who know current theory and are passionately committed to it in ways that make them see aspects of my books I'm not aware of—as for instance, I allow but do not agree with my friend Rod McGillis's comments in a theoretically-informed article published in *CCL* about how *The Same Place But Different* replicates conventional and counter-productive views of masculinity. It comes, I think, with the territory.

Katz expresses the concern that the kind of reading of her books that academics like Hoogland and Kertzer (and McGillis?) do leads to censorship: "librarians in small public libraries are still told by certain powerful other librarians that I am a controversial writer, and some teachers are even told that they should not teach my books" (64). If that's true — and in the current censorious climate, I have all too little reason to doubt that it is — then it's deeply and tragically unfortunate. I hate the idea that a librarian or a teacher would remove a book and silence an author simply because it was "controversial," or even because some readers managed to have negative ways of reading it. I equally hate the idea that the way to prevent this from happening is to silence readers like Kertzer and Hoogland and McGillis and me. Censorship of negative criticism based on sincere and committed readings of books is, surely, not a good way to promote anti-censorship.

So what, then, might be a good way to promote anti-censorship? I think the answer can be found right here, in this discussion — in Kertzer and Hoogland's willingness and opportunity to enter into dialogue with Katz's novels, in Katz and Micros's willingness and opportunity to enter into dialogue with Kertzer and Hoogland, in my own willingness and opportunity to respond to Katz. We can engage in these encounters with each others' writings only so long as the writings are there to engage with — as long as none of them, not Katz's and not Hoogland's and Kertzer's, has been censored into silence and non-existence. And we want to engage in them, I suspect, because all of us understand the degree to which all forms of writing are incomplete recipes for dialogue, invitations to negotiate our own responses and tell each other and other readers about them. If we operate with an understanding of how very much our engagements with books are dialogues, then we will, surely, allow and rejoice in as wide a range of dialogues as possible, from readers of every sort — not just from those committed to what they believe the author intended. In this scheme of things, no one

would be allowed to hide my book behind the librarian's desk because it reminds someone of multiple personality disorder or because one of its characters uses racist language or represents a counterproductive masculinity; and at the same time, no readers would be prevented from talking about how these matters do or do not affect them, and about how they think they ought to affect other readers also.

And that includes, perhaps especially includes, children. The assumption of the censors Katz rightfully worries about is always the same: that whereas I, the censor, respond to what I perceive as racism or sexism or whatever and am horrified by it, child readers will not be so horrified — the gullible little dears will simply accept what they read as true, and that's why we have to keep these dangerous books out of their hands. (I think this is what the grade six girl who heard *Behaving Bradley* was most worried about— other children would hear this language and use it.) If there's any truth in this underestimation of the good sense of children, it emerges from the fact that so many adults work hard to keep children gullible — not just to deprive them of supposedly dangerous knowledge, but also, to encourage them to read so they identify with and learn from characters. Both Micros and Katz appear to approve of this sort of reading — to "become Ben," as an "intended reader" would, is to read with and not against or apart from the book, with and not against or apart from the character, to see the world as he sees it. Indeed, Katz speaks approvingly of her perception that "Most readers, and especially children, read a story from beginning to end, and, as far as I know, don't interrupt themselves to think upon topics such as divorce, race, point of view, etc." (51).

I don't share that perception. I find it hard to imagine that readers personally involved in a divorce could read a story about divorce or intolerance without some consciousness of its possible connection to themselves, especially when "relating to" or "identifying with" fictional characters are our currently most common reading practices. In *Out of the Dark*, in fact, Ben himself reads Norse mythology in terms of his own concerns about his mother's death and his move to a new, strange place. I think that makes him a good reader, not a bad one — he reads to connect himself to what he reads, not simply to immerse himself in a story, blot out himself and his own interest, and become someone else. Indeed, his problems deepen when he *does* immerse himself in the stories — he must force himself finally not to lose himself and "become" the Viking Tor.

Furthermore, I think it's good that Ben intervenes with what he reads in this way. I wish more children could do it — and could do it exactly in terms of the critical and theoretical stances adopted by Kertzer and Hoogland (and McGillis and me). If there's danger for children in reading fiction, it's only there for truly gullible readers, readers who do become "intended readers" and buy absolutely into whatever view of the world or themselves a

book happens to be selling. There may be little apparent harm in a reader "becoming" Ben — although I can certainly see why Hoogland thinks there might be. But there is certainly great potential harm in young readers "becoming" the self-centred, cold-hearted heroes and heroines of Goosebumps or Animorphs. Not all characters in children's fiction are worth becoming.

The skill that will protect child readers from danger might well make them more thoughtful readers, more critical thinkers, about all books, all texts, all things. They might well be less capable of just being absorbed into a book, disappearing into its view of things. I have to see that as a loss worth the gain. The girl who worried about "Jungle Bunnies" was better off than a child who simply got thoughtlessly absorbed in my book and thoughtlessly began to use the scurrilous language of some of its characters. She and her classmates would be better off in a classroom that read *False Face* in the context of a free, open, and possibly sometimes negative discussion of it than in a classroom that pretended the book didn't exist in order to silence its presumably negative qualities.

Such discussions are pleasurable. So is the thinking from which they emerge. Micros suggests that academic writers who read against texts "have lost the pleasure of reading" (65). Not so. Thinking is not the binary opposite of pleasure. It can be an enormous pleasure in itself — surely a main pleasure offered by the act of reading. Being in the possession of a range of theoretical strategies that allow one to think about what one reads in a variety of interesting ways equips one, not to kill texts, but to keep them alive, pleasurable and stimulating subjects of thought for ourselves and other readers.

Consider, for instance, the text of the Katz interview. In his discussion of the separation of texts from their authors, Frye goes on to say that "every poet has his private mythology, his own spectroscopic band or peculiar formation of symbols, of much of which he is quite unconscious" (11). If I assume that's true of all texts and read Katz's words in terms of some theoretical strategies I happen to possess and value, I can see a number of things in it she might not see herself — things that help me to understand her books, and not necessarily in unflattering ways.

First, on the question of mothers. Katz says, not just that Ben is her son, but also that she deeply identifies with him: "I generally enter the mind[s] and heart[s] of the adolescent protagonists at a very deep level, as deep as I can go in my imagination" (54). I find this matter of being both mother and the person one mothers fascinating. As I suggested earlier, I'm not convinced we parents aren't deluding ourselves when we think we understand our children. I might, superficially, accuse Katz of offering her young readers characters to identify with who actually represent maternal wish-fulfilment fantasies, children as a mother might like to imagine them and might hope for adolescent readers to become. But I suspect the situation is more complicated than that.

One reason I have that suspicion is the interesting fact that Ben, a creation of Katz's whom she says she thinks of as a son, himself creates a model of a Viking ship — and gives it the name of his own dead mother, thus strangely inverting Katz's own actions. Having maternally created this surrogate mother, furthermore, Ben worries about how others will treat it once it has left his hands: "When they had her, they would hurt her. That's what people like that did" (163). This is strangely reminiscent of Katz's attitudes to her own character and her critics as expressed in the interview. It's therefore good to see how Ben moves past his need to protect, and finds his enemies less hostile than he imagined.

Another complicating factor is another paradoxical statement — that the teenagers in Katz's daughter's Japanese Anime Club think of her as being "one of them" when they call her by the name of "the only mother figure in one of their favourite animation series" (55). How can someone both be one of a group of teenagers and a mother to them? It sounds impossible, an attempt to occupy two different and even opposite positions at the same time (as Ben is somehow both son and mother to "Frances" in *Out of the Dark*). And in this way, it mirrors much of what Katz says about her writing throughout the interview. She says, "I think that I become a bit schizophrenic when I write. I am both me, the tactician and writer, *and* whichever main character I have chosen to be the point-of-view character for the scene" (54). She also says, "what I hope from my reader is a kind of dichotomy: that the reader, while retaining the intelligence to put together clues about my character's dilemma, on an emotional level will 'become' my character" (52).

Three things become apparent to me here. First, as Kertzer's article suggests, Katz's thinking is often centred on questions of motherhood. Second, Katz does very much think in terms of binaries, and in terms of oppositions between them, between being a mother figure and being a teenager, between reading with involvement and reading as destruction, between characters as individuals and characters as representations of types. But, third, Katz keeps suggesting ways in which the opposites her mind plays with must be seen as somehow both true at the same time — expressive of exactly that hybrid mixture of supposedly opposed forces that Hoogland claims is lacking in Katz's novels. Katz sees herself as neither mother nor not-mother, neither writer-creator nor created character, but both at the same time; and her suggestion that readers should at the same time "become" characters *and* think about them reveals a parallel state of oppositional hybridity.

If I go back and read *False Face* in the light of what I find in the interview, I see how very much the novel, too, is built around binary opposites — not merely the division between white and aboriginal within Tom, but also between the two opposing sides of the False Face masks, between each of the two central masks as one tries to control the other, between Laney and Tom as representing opposite assumptions and as alternating focalized charac-

ters, between the business values of Laney's mother and the scholarly attitudes of her father, between Laney's loner status and her sister's popularity, between the development and preservation of the bog, between the museum and the antique shop, between doing art for oneself and doing it for acclaim, and so on and so on. But all that is fairly obvious; the important question is, does Katz here, as in her interview, strive to find ways of accommodating both sides of the oppositions, to make them both true at the same time? Hoogland says she doesn't. I'm not so sure.

It's certainly true that the characters who represent the opposite poles that war within the masks and with Tom and Laney are flamboyantly oppositional. But they must be, in order for the book to establish the divided mask as representative of Tom and Laney's divisive situation, inside each of them and between each other. The book would have less clarity, and be much less intense and involving, if Laney's mother were less caught up in money-making or her father less of an impractical dreamer, or if Tom had met a variety of different people on his trip back to the reserve, some of whom might have been happy to accept him as he is. Even so, there are signs at the end of the novel that Laney's mother has a softer side, her father a tougher one, that they are less one-sided and oppositional than they pretend to be — each a set of warring characteristics within and together possibly becoming more willing to accept each other's oppositeness. It seems that something similar happens to Laney and Tom.

But the novel itself, unfortunately, declares otherwise. At the end, Tom thinks of his own tears as "not red and not black, not White and not Indian. Just tears from someone who was a person, nothing else" (145). This clearly implies that Tom is most significantly a unique individual — a being essentially separate from his racial background. And in terms of how I read the novel as a whole up to this point, this rings false to me.

It rings false, first, in human terms. I resist the conclusion that what we humans essentially are is something inside us, an invisible entity separate from our bodies and our physical being. To have a body, to be a being with and not just in a body, is to have a skin — a skin whose colour does indeed signal our connections with various other people past and present in a variety of ways. It matters. To dismiss it is to dismiss a significant aspect of what it means to be human and to live with other people.

But more important in this context, it rings false to me in terms of how I understand the novel up to this point. Tom is, to be sure, not white and not Indian — but as the entire book seems to be asserting, that doesn't mean he is not white *and* Indian — a hybrid combination of theoretically distinct and often warring forces. The logic of the book would suggest that Tom should end up proud to be what the mask itself is when it is its best self, not one thing or the other, but two halves in harmony, both different but not necessar-

ily warring things at once. And so too, Laney, in terms of the ways in which she has both her father and mother in her life and in her character.

In other words: I have a sense that the novel itself implies a more subtle reading of the situation than the boldly assertive language of its conclusion implies. I suspect the same is also true of *Out of the Dark.* Its resolution occurs so quickly, and its end follows so soon after, that it seems to be implying the same unconvincingly easy solution to the problem—the forgetting of racial and other differences in the name of a shared humanity—in a way that misrepresents the rich complexities of the story so far. In both cases, then, I see what it is that Hoogland focuses on; but I also sense something larger and deeper and more interesting struggling to express itself and not quite finding the language to do so.

I sense that because I re-read these books after reading Hoogland's and Kertzer's articles and then Katz's response to them. All three writers offered information about their own perceptions of the books that caused me to want to revisit the books and rethink my own readings of them. My rethinking has caused me to appreciate them in ways I didn't before. I'm glad for that. And I think it's important for me to point out that none of us read the novels in ways that blotted out our own individual concerns in the service of some imagined intended reader — not the three of us who are critics, obviously, but not Katz either. She knows far too much of what she did as a writer and how she wants her work to be understood to be able to read the finished book without a distorting vested interest, a theory of her own that may or may not match what the novels themselves actually do manage to do.

My conclusion, then, is that the sorts of readings for which Katz expresses such dismay are not inherently destructive. Ideally, they open up dialogues, and good books, and, like these two novels of Katz's, can survive all kinds of dialogues. According to Frank Kermode, "The success of interpretive argument as a means of conferring or endorsing value is ... not to be measured by the survival of the comment but by the survival of the object. Of course, an interpretation may live on in the tradition on which later comment is formed, either by acceptance or reaction; but its primary purpose is to provide the medium in which its object survives" (67). I think that's true. It means that texts that don't get discussed by a wide variety of readers disappear from view, cease to be of interest to any readers at all. Discussion, even especially negative discussion, is what keeps texts alive.

This current discussion means that Katz's novels are very much alive — and I think, very much deserve to be so. Indeed, the mere fact that so many readers feel the power of these books strongly enough to wish to express their concerns about them reveals how very much alive the books are. I find myself hoping desperately for similar critical attention for my own books.

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Welwyn Wilton Katz's Response

• *Welwyn Wilton Katz* •

I would rather not try to respond to the separate people who have written in response to my interview with Marianne Micros, because I see their responses as all seeming to deal with different things, but which, when you come down to it, fundamentally address the issue of literary criticism in general. It is this issue that I will deal with in my general response here.

I am reminded of those antique tin cans of corned beef. Are any of you old enough to remember them? They came with a key, and you had to attach the key to a metal tab in the side of the tin. Then you turned the key, and kept turning it, and a horrible long strip of extremely sharp metal wound itself around the key and around it, and in the end there was that key wound about with sharp, wounding metal in one hand and an open "cap" which was equally sharp and dangerous in the other, while the meat lay temptingly inside. In this dialogue, I intend to begin the dangerous process of getting to the meat, which is literary criticism, while running great risk of damaging myself (and maybe you, too) in the process.

Some people felt bothered, offended, threatened, or hurt by what I had to say in the interview between Marianne Micros and myself in the summer 1998 issue of *CCL*. That is a pity, because it was the truth as I see it about the kind of reviews or articles a number of critics have written (or whispered) about my books. Along with many thoughtful, conscientious literary reviews that I have received on my books over the years (not all of which were positive, I hasten to add), I have received literary criticism that has bothered, offended, threatened, or hurt me very much as well. So, what kind of literary criticism do I consider thoughtful and conscientious? What kind do I consider offensive and hurtful?

In my interview, I said very clearly that I have written literary reviews of books myself and that sometimes I had to write negative remarks about the books I reviewed. I thought I made it clear that this happened when in the book the author had done something that for me broke the book's "magic" (that nearly indefinable thing that keeps me in the world of the book from beginning to end, that makes me believe I am there, that I am even one or

more of the characters). When I begin to write literary criticism of a book, I always begin by asking myself the question: Was there anything *inside* this book that took me *outside* the world of the book? And if I must answer Yes to that question, it is time for the all-important question #2 which is: "Did the thing that took me outside the world of the book do so because of the *author's* error, or did it do it because I am particularly aware of an issue in the world at large that somehow this book brought to my mind?"

If the answer to question #2 is that I was torn out of the book because the author did something wrong with point-of-view, or the events didn't connect in an overall cause-and-effect manner, or because the author didn't notice a terrible inconsistency in the logic of the events, or because the author made the characters his/her puppets instead of letting them be real people with needs and wants of their own that the author should have served (while allowing those needs and wants to dictate the course of the author's plot), or because the author preached to me, or because she/he didn't respect my ability to read and draw my own conclusions and so underlined what he/she wanted noticed in a thousand or even one too many ways, or if the author didn't bother writing dialogue that was consistent with character, etc. etc. etc. — well, then, it *was* the author's fault that the book world was broken for me and I have to say so.

But if I am drawn out of the world because I say to myself something like "Look, an archaeologist in Peru gets killed in this book by the Shining Path — arrgh!" (something of great personal interest to me because my husband is an archaeologist who will be going to the northern Andes of Peru to do archaeological survey work this summer) — well, it's not the *author's* fault that my husband is going there, is it? So I was drawn out of the book, but the book wasn't at fault.

Or let's say I've got this deeply-held personal belief about the way books should be written: never in the first person, never in the present tense. (I don't hold this belief — see my own short story "You Can Take Them Back" — but I prefer to use this less charged example instead of political correctness or voice appropriation.) So, let's say I really don't think anyone should ever write in the first-person present tense and somebody gives me a book to review that is written in the first-person present tense. Am I being fair to say that this book is no good because it kicked me out of its magical world, when, in fact, I never allowed myself to enter the book's magical world in the first place?

What I believe about literary criticism is that it must come from *within* the integrity (wholeness) of the book, not from *without*, where the critic's own biases or personal beliefs reside.

I always welcomed literary criticism that came from *within* my books, as I'm sure all writers do. The reason I always welcomed it when it came my

way was because often my themes or my characters' actions "push the envelope" in order to explore some of the raw edges of the human condition. If a reviewer notices that and deals with it in the review, then something important has been done for the book and for readers as a whole, and maybe even for the human condition.

Look at Mrs. McIntyre in *False Face*, for instance. How responsible is she for her own actions? That is one thing I would dearly have loved the critics to examine. It is an important question about the human condition generally. She has been "taken over"; so is she bad? Or is she just weak? Or is she not responsible at all? No one, not one literary critic, ever addressed this issue in *False Face*. And the ending: Laney has to stay with Mrs. McIntyre. Was I right to believe that that was the way things would have to happen? Was my decision there true to the book? Was it fair to Laney? Did Laney learn anything in the course of the book that made it even *possible* for her to keep living with her mother?

A mother who tries to kill her daughter: this pushes the envelope in fiction (though it happens all too frequently in real life). A daughter who has to continue to live with a mother who tried to kill her. This pushes the envelope in fiction. Why do I push the envelope like this? Well, it isn't because I'm trying to preach my own personal "truth" about an issue. If I knew the "truth" about such an issue what would be the point of writing about it? I learn from what I write: that is one reason I am a writer. I learn from what I write because I live the characters' lives as I record what the characters do and say and think and — yes — learn. I am hopeful that my readers, too, will learn something of their own from what I write. But I would be horrified if anyone thought I was preaching to my readers or deliberately teaching my readers what I have learned over the course of writing my book. What I want, really *all* I want when I push the envelope as I do in so many of my books, is simply for people to think for themselves about these issues, these dilemmas, these knotty human problems. And I do *not* want them to think about these things until they have experienced them for themselves fully; that is, until they have lived the world of my book and finished it and come out of it and become themselves again.

I would like reviewers, when they review my books, to deal with the books from the *inside* the way I review other peoples' books. That's all. Just that. If I make mistakes *within* the book world I write, mistakes that tear readers out of that book world and make them shake their heads over those mistakes, I deserve to be taken to task for it. If I don't do that, but a reviewer approaches my book from an *outside* stance he/she has taken before even reading the book, *looking* for something she/he hates for whatever reason and so never allowing him/herself to be taken into the world of the book at all, then that, in my opinion, is unfair, unethical, and extremely wrong-headed criticism.

I do not accept criticism of the latter sort. I will never accept it. I will never, ever, let political correctness or postmodern desires to deconstruct (destroy) the integrity of my stories in order to prove or disprove someone's fancy theories about literature as a whole, affect what I choose to write or how I choose to write about it. Does that make me a controversial writer? Or am I just stupid? Or maybe — am I perhaps — just a little bit brave? Go figure.

I will always push the envelope, at least I will if I ever write another children's book. Critics should be glad of that. The reason they should be glad is because my pushing the envelope, my going to the very edge of the human condition and sticking the reader with its problems, gives the critics a lot to write about. But do they write about it? The good ones do. But so many do not. Oh, how I would love to see some of the "edges" I've explored in my books analyzed and thought about with the dedication that the deconstructionists and the voice-appropriation specialists have devoted to these same books!

I think critics are most useful when they don't just summarize the plot of a book and say whether they like it or not, but rather when they discuss the important moral issues that come to the reader's attention because of the strengths of the book, or the important moral dilemmas that do not get the attention the author should have given them. What is literature *for* if not to help us to think about the human condition? And so I push the envelope: I go to the nasty sharp edges of humanity, and there I begin to explore. I don't expect other writers to do what I do, and I don't review books from the point of view that they should. I just wish that the critics who review my books would pay attention to that aspect of my books, and decide from their own experience (having allowed themselves a fair stab at living in my book-world at least at the beginning of their reading), whether I was honest in my exploration and true to the characters right to the end, or whether I failed as a writer because something I did wrong kicked them out of the world I was exploring.

I might cut my fingers to the bone on the sharp metal edges of this one, but here goes. There is a mostly wonderful book on the market right now that for a hundred plus pages went right to the messy edge of the human condition. It was a "push-the-envelope" book, at least in its beginning. (Not that that matters to whether it was a good book or not.) You will all have read this book: it is *The Maestro*, by Tim Wynne-Jones. I loved that book, right up until the moment of the fire. And then, sadly, the book threw me out of its world. You see, to *me* (though clearly not to Tim, who is far too good a writer not to have thought of it and tried to deal with it with integrity) it was all wrong that the boy hero, Burl, saved his horrible father instead of the single copy of the sheet music of a genius. It seemed to me all wrong *not* because it is better to save priceless music than a callous, abusive drunken human

being, but because nowhere in the book before the fire could I see that Burl came to value *the apparently* valueless human being, which his father certainly seemed to him to be. Had I reviewed this book I would have spent a great deal of time on this issue. Yet as far as I know, no review or academic paper has ever discussed the issue of Burl's decision to save the father instead of the music in relation to Burl's development as a character and to the integrity of the book as a whole. Unless I'm way out of touch here, the hard questions about the relative value of things *and people* in *The Maestro* were simply not asked.

Now I am personally very happy to have read this book, even though it did kick me out of its world. As a person, it made me think about the relative value of priceless things compared to apparently useless people. As a writer, it made me wonder how *I* would have ended the book, if it had been mine to write and I had chosen to let Burl do what he really wanted and save the music. As a writer also, I imagined the battles I would have had to fight with the editors to be allowed to let Burl save the music instead of his father. Editors know what most people like to read about, and this is generally not someone letting someone else die merely to save some sheet music. People like their heroes to be noble. People like to think human beings are more important than sheet music. But are they really? Are *all* people more important than *all* things? I'm not saying they are, and I'm not saying they aren't. What I'm saying is that this is an important question about the human condition that was absolutely implicit to the integrity of *The Maestro*, and no one that I know about except *me* seems ever to have asked the question.

Literary reviewers have a responsibility to look past the surface of their own likes and dislikes, their own pet projects and personal peeves. They must first decide if a book is worth reviewing at all. Then they must ask themselves whether the book succeeds or fails. Then they must ask themselves why. (They could do worse than to ask my Questions #1 and #2.) Too many reviewers do not review the book from inside that book's integrity, its wholeness as a book. Too many bring baggage of their own from outside. And not enough, not nearly enough critics think deep and hard about what the book is really saying (or asking) about the human condition.

Welwyn Wilton Katz *is the author of ten books which have been published in many languages throughout the world. Besides winning the Vicky Metcalf award for her entire body of work, she has won or been short-listed for prizes such as the Governor General's Award, the Ruth Schwartz Award, and the CLA Book of the Year, among many others. Her latest work is a collaboration with Laszlo Gal, a retelling of* ***Beowulf.***

Marianne Micros's Response

• *Marianne Micros* •

My interview of Welwyn Katz in *CCL* 90 (24.2) has received several responses from critic/writers. I have read the responses, and I have attempted to look at them objectively. This is difficult since, to be honest, I was deeply disturbed by some of the statements. I understand Welwyn's feelings when reading negative criticisms of her words; I can also understand the objections expressed by those who felt attacked by Welwyn (and by me). These responses to criticism demonstrate that our writing — whether creative or critical — is personal to us, especially since our reputations can be affected. However, as individuals, we all have our own theories about literature, our own unique experiences of life, our own ways of practicing the craft of writing as a means of expressing our views.

Welwyn, Marianne, Adrienne, Perry, and Cornelia — we are all writers and analysts, yet we do not define analysis, intellectual activity, reading, or pleasure in the same way. Because of this, we can misread each other and misunderstand each other's views and intentions. I believe that we each have intentions when we write and that we might (unconsciously or consciously) have a particular reader in mind, although we must acknowledge that an actual reader is often different in some way from that implied reader. It should not surprise us when we find we are misunderstood — but it does, and the misinterpretations can wound us. I do not mean to suggest that there is only one way to read a book or article. Of course there isn't and there shouldn't be. I agree with Wolfgang Iser that there are many "indeterminate elements" in texts, but I myself cannot go so far as to believe that misreadings are impossible, as some other reader-response theorists claim.

I believe that each individual reads in his or her own way and that some of those differences are determined by age, level of education, experience, and other factors, including individual personality. In my research into child reading, I have been intrigued by theories proposed by Peter Hunt and by Perry Nodelman. Hunt says that the child reader is able to "surrender to the book on its own terms" (and that there might be times when an adult can do this as well). Perry believes that children read differently sim-

ply because they haven't lived as long as adults or had so many experiences. However, I object, as I say on pp. 51-2 of the interview, to the classification of books by age groups, to labelling based on certain "intended readers." Every child cannot be labelled by his or her age, since children grow and learn at different rates and have different interests.

Nevertheless, those who write for children must have some understanding of what most children like to read in order to write successfully for them. Children's books are marketed as such, and they do stand out as different from adult literature in some ways. There is a difference between children's books and adult books, child readers and adult readers, reading styles of children and adults, even though it is true that not all children, nor all adults, read alike.

Given these differences, what happens when an adult reads a child's book for academic purposes? Adult analysis of children's books is a useful, beneficial, and necessary project done by adults who teach these texts, buy them for children, or wish to discuss them with other adults or with children. Nevertheless, I believe that academic critics may at times read a book in a way which distorts it. If that reader becomes angry at a book, thinking it is faulty in some way (which may or may not be the case), he or she is probably not reading with pleasure and delight. I did not mean to imply that everyone must read a book in the same way, but I do believe that an application of theories from outside the book (ones not evident to "young" readers in age or heart) can distort or spoil the book.

When I said that academic critics might be "reading against the intended reader," it is true that I was distinguishing between reading a book and analyzing a book. Is reading the same as critiquing or analyzing? Is it reading when one begins analyzing according to theoretical models? I'm not sure. To me reading is sitting in a big comfortable chair with a book in my hand and a bowl of popcorn on my lap. Of course I cannot help analyzing when I read — I am an adult with a PhD who teaches literary analysis — I can't help but think, analyze, apply. But when I *read* for pleasure, I don't underline, stop to check references, or check the books of theory on my desk. In fact, I don't sit at a desk at all. I lose myself in the book and the popcorn. I let the whole experience enclose me and engulf me, and I try hard to shut out those voices whispering, "Analyze me. Deconstruct me." However, I also get great pleasure out of analyzing books, an activity which can lead to fuller and more complex responses to a text, though I find this a different kind of pleasure than the pleasure of simple reading. Although I can't help but analyze as I read a book, it happens naturally and to a different extent than it does when I read with a pencil in my hand, making notes and underlining.

I was especially displeased to see that these respondents —Adrienne, Perry, and Cornelia — believe that I, and Welwyn as well, are "anti-intellectual," that we oppose analysis entirely, and reject the idea that analytical

reading can be pleasurable. Because I don't particularly enjoy certain types of criticism, it doesn't necessarily follow that I am against all analysis and find no pleasure in it. The same is true of Welwyn. She does welcome "informed discussion" (Cornelia's phrase) of her books, but she has felt that some critical commentary has misrepresented her books. Nor do I believe that "emotional responses to a work [should] be divorced from intellectual consideration" (Cornelia's response). That is a misinterpretation of my words.

I did say that I thought that "there are *some* academic writers who have lost the pleasure of reading." I did not say that *all* critics have lost the pleasure of reading. I do not myself find pleasure in judging a book by imposing theoretical structures from the outside or in policing a text for political correctness — but some critics might find these acts pleasurable. I give one example as to why I believe that reading literature could become a lost pleasure in the academic world. Ask a graduate student in a university English Department what he or she is working on. The answer is rarely "Edmund Spenser" or "Emily Bronte" or "Ezra Pound" or "Welwyn Katz" — but instead a particular theory or theorist. Sometimes theory actually replaces the reading and close perusal of the primary text. I think there is a place for this type of theorizing — but I would not call it "reading for pleasure."

As evidence of the pleasure I derive from analysis, I would like to explain the class presentation that I described at the beginning of the interview. This presentation, totally conceived and performed by students, was not an attack against Cornelia, though she apparently takes it as such, nor against any other critics. Each student used some type of theory or issue in an analysis of *False Face*. These approaches were not mocked or belittled, but shown to be valid and interesting ways of discussing the book. The student who played the role of Welwyn gave what he thought would be the author's positions. All this was thoughtfully done, with my support, since one of my pleasures is teaching literary analysis, something I do in every class. I entered (and completed) PhD studies because I love the whole process of literary analysis. I encouraged the students to read Adrienne's and Cornelia's articles because I wanted them to learn to look at a book from all sides and in every possible way. I also wanted them to think about a living author who wants and deserves the opportunity to respond to criticisms of her works. That, too, was my real purpose in interviewing Welwyn — to allow her that opportunity. I did not "prompt" her, but was in fact responding to what I already knew were her concerns.

Another misinterpretation occurred in Adrienne's rendering of my review of Sandra Birdsell's *The Town That Floated Away* that appeared in the same issue as the interview. I decided to write a non-traditional review, one that would explore the process I underwent in my attempt to analyze the book. I was having difficulty finding a reading stance for myself and wondered why. The book seemed to suggest allegorical readings which didn't

quite materialize while retaining a playfully childlike tone. Though trying to understand readers of different ages, I was not labelling readers according to any strict criteria. In fact, at the end of the process I had undertaken, I found that my response to the book was the same whether I tried to read as a child or as an analytical adult. The approaches to reading that I tried out had fused into one. I had discovered for myself that one cannot categorize a reader by age or by ability to analyze.

I suggest everyone become aware of his/her own reading process, just as an exercise, as I did in my review. This is what Perry did in his response to the interview. He assessed and re-assessed himself as reader and writer; he reread the interview, the articles in question, and the books themselves. He came up with new readings of Welwyn's books and shared something of himself with us. He made me think about myself, as critic and writer. Are these two selves in opposition to each other? Can I rejoice in that, as Perry does? I have had more difficulties with these different roles than Perry has, it seems, though I have now reconciled some of those differences. I hope I reach Perry's stage, of finding the writer and critic within himself engaging in "a friendly and productive conversation." That is just what we all should be doing: writers and critics, all of us readers, need to be conversing. Let something productive come out of this conversation, something that does not ignore our humanity, our emotions, and our intellectual processes (all of which, I agree, exist together, if not always harmoniously).

In actuality, all of us — Welwyn, Cornelia, Adrienne, Perry, and I — agree that literature should be read and analyzed, discussed and debated. Certainly, works that carry messages of hate and bigotry should be criticized — but that is not true of Welwyn's works. Can one blame her, then, for feeling that she has been subjected to the same binary thinking for which she is criticized in her work? Can one blame her for objecting to a reading that accuses her of binary thinking, when it is her male protagonist, who belongs to two cultures and is an adolescent, who struggles with binary thinking, not the author herself? In fact, Welwyn's book *False Face* shows us the divisiveness caused by binary thinking and the falsity and hatred that can cause, or result from, labelling and stereotyping. Can one blame her for feeling that her work has been colonized by others? It is easy to say a writer should not take what she sees as misrepresentations personally — but it *is personal*, especially to a writer who writes out of deep emotions and convictions.

I'd like to come back to one of the main topics of the interview — the silencing of a writer. Can a writer be silenced? Even if a writer continues to write, her works, especially if they have been labelled as "politically incorrect" in negative reviews and critical articles, might not be purchased for bookstores and libraries. A writer can indeed be prevented from writing because of others' impressions. Censorship and silencing of a writer can take place on many levels, as has been emphatically demonstrated in *CCL*'s cen-

sorship issue, which details this process and its financial consequences to a writer [available on line at http://www.uoguelph.ca/englit/ccl/].

The critics who responded to the *CCL* interview I did with Welwyn have shown by their comments that they were offended by Welwyn's objections to their words, just as she was offended by their words in the first place; they obviously had invested something personal in their critical writing, just as Welwyn has in her fiction. Surely we must *all* be allowed to voice our opinions, but we should try to be as fair as possible, understanding and accepting that we all can have biases.

We should celebrate our differences and recognize our very human emotions. Intellect and emotion are indeed inseparable in readers, as Cornelia argues. They are also inseparable within writers and critics — during and after the writing process. This is very evident in the responses of these critics to the interview.

I have written poems about the silencing of the artist, including one called "Island," set on the island of Delos: These are the last three stanzas:

> the boat will leave without her
> no hands will wave no smiles of goodbye
> if she misses the boat she must climb
> up to watch its slow progress to
> there wherever the next island
> the other harbour
>
> she will be absent
> cut out from her own history
> a blank space in the photograph
> of the tourists coming home
>
> nor is she here —
> forbidden to be born or
> die here she can do neither
> only rest in between
>
> Marianne Micros

Marianne Micros *earned her PhD from the University of Western Ontario and has published in numerous critical and literary journals. She is the author of* ***Upstairs Over the Ice Cream****, a collection of poetry, and continues to write poetry, as well as novels for young readers, one of which is under consideration by a publisher. Her most recent critical article is "Et in Ontario Ego: The Pastoral Ideal and the Blazon Tradition in Alice Munro's 'Lichen'" in* ***Essays on Canadian Writing*** *66 (1999), a special issue on Alice Munro. She teaches early modern literature, children's literature, and theoretical approaches to literature at the University of Guelph.*

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A Riveting Finale for A Great Trilogy

The Taker's Key. Martine Bates. Red Deer, 1998. 186 pp. $9.95 paper. ISBN 0-88995-184-5.

Martine Bates is an exciting author who has broken into the young adult market with a spellbinding fantasy trilogy: *The Dragon's Tapestry*, *The Prism Moon* and now *The Taker's Key*. The first two books in the trilogy are very well-written, with intriguing, fast-paced plot-lines, excellent characterization and a fantasy setting that rapidly becomes as familiar as one's own backyard. The third novel follows in their footsteps.

The Taker's Key finds the young Wizard of Ve, Marwen, facing two foes at the outset. The first is the unknown being who is stealing the magic of Ve, thus destroying a kingdom dependent on magic in every aspect of life. The second is the hostility and disbelief of most of the Oldwives, the primary workers of magic in the kingdom, who must support the Wizard if she can prove that she is, indeed, the rightful heir to the Wizard's staff. By setting Marwen against two foes at once, the second of whom she must win over rapidly if she is to discover and defeat the first, Bates sets up incredible dramatic tension while plunging the reader straight into a riveting plot.

The pace does not falter throughout the novel, as Marwen and the Oldwives travel together to find the Key that will restore magic to the land, while also seeking the dragon whom they discover is stealing their magic. The clever twists in the plot keep the story from becoming boring or predictable.

Further, the characters are completely engaging. The reader can rapidly distinguish the caustic Oldwife Brott from the whining apprentice Ona, the quietly supportive Bashag from the doubting yet open Manape. Marwen herself is strong and true to the character developed throughout the trilogy, while she continues to develop even further in this novel. By the end of the quest for the Key, she has grown even deeper in power and strength. She has

faced her greatest demons and won, even as she gives up the one thing most important to her.

The only place where the characterization of Marwen seems inconsistent is in the ending when, rather than live with the Prince and husband she loves, she stays in her Oldwife cottage to serve the people of her village. Yet, such a sacrifice is in line with the strong, independent character Bates has developed, who can indeed love both passionately and selflessly.

This trilogy is not be missed by young adult *or* adult lovers of fantasy.

Weet's Quest: An Exciting Dinosaur Adventure

Weet's Quest. John Wilson. Napoleon, 1997. 161 pp. $8.95 paper. ISBN 0-929141-52-0.

John Wilson's first children's novel, *Weet*, is geared for youngsters who love stories about dinosaurs. However, it is also an exciting adventure that most preteens will enjoy. Like *Weet*, *Weet's Quest* will entrance the same varied group of readers.

Weet's Quest is set some months after the protagonists, Eric and Rose, with their dog Sally, have returned to modern times after travelling to the Late Cretaceous period in the previous adventure. They returned to their own time *prior* to their adventure in Weet's world. In *Weet's Quest*, the three return to Weet's world, this time after a terrifying car accident. This transitional device, which transports the protagonists to Weet's world, is initially effective. However, there are problems with this device. The question of how the protagonists could have survived the horrendous car accident that flung them into Weet's world is problematic. Another problem is that they always arrive back in our time *before* the accidents that propel them into Weet's time so they can avoid those accidents the second time, which just seems too neat.

However, the novel is an exciting read. The children meet Weet as he is on a quest to find his ancestors who live over the mountains, and go through many adventures with him. Eric and Rose are somewhat flat as characters, not developing at all. Eric's tendency to take control of every situation, even in a world where he is a visitor, is annoying at times. But Weet is an interesting character, and Wilson obviously had fun creating him and making him convincing. He is a dinosaur with human shape, but without the ability to change facial expressions or laugh, as his lizard-like exterior is not flexible enough. He is, however, similar enough in his interests and emotions to be likeable, so that the reader can really engage with this alien yet familiar youngster from another species.

Wilson's portrayal of the other dinosaurs is extremely accurate, using the most up-to-date facts about dinosaurs, and even bringing in convincing evidence that dinosaurs were, in fact, warm-blooded, a theory which is

beginning to be credited by serious scientists in the field. The setting is also very realistic for the time, and shows a very different landscape than what we know as Alberta and BC, including the gentle range of hills that would one day become the Rockies.

Overall, *Weet's Quest* is a fun read, based on good scholarship. It has some flaws, but none that seriously spoil this wonderful adventure set 65 million years ago.

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A Scientific *Jeu d'Esprit*

Life on Mars. Donn Kushner. Illus. D.J. Knight. Childe Thursday, 1998. 103 pp. $14.50 paper. ISBN 0-920459-45-5. May be ordered through Childe Thursday, 29 Sussex Ave., Toronto ON M5S 1J6, (416) 979-2544.

A scientist and author of several children's books, Donn Kushner has produced in *Life on Mars* a novel that is simultaneously a scientific *jeu d'esprit*, a social satire, and an anthropological allegory.

As a scientific game, *Life on Mars* explains how the Viking Landers sent from Earth failed to detect life on the Red Planet. Extrapolating from scientific evidence about harsh conditions on Mars, Kushner describes a hardy, hand-sized, mushroom-shaped race of intelligent beings whose heads contain algae that photosynthesizes oxygen. Hosting parasites that eat all biological traces they leave on the soil, Martians managed to evade detection and its consequent problems by simply staying out of range of the lander's cameras.

As a satire, the novel presents Martian culture as an amusing distortion of Earth's. After receiving television signals from Earth for two hours, the Martians developed games that re-enact a news broadcast, a football game, a cowboy movie, and a commercial. Not understanding what they saw, however, the Martians made their games peaceful mathematical contests, thus implicitly criticizing Earth's pervasive violence. Individual Martians, who adopt the identities of figures from the television broadcasts, are also vehicles for social satire. For example, the Martian adopting the identity of Washington, the former slave in the cowboy movie, is honoured by the Martians, who considered Washington to be the most accomplished and important soldier. Similarly, Sister Sarah, inspired by the movie's missionary, satirizes religious zealots: against all reason, she insists that the lander contains the Martian ruler, a godlike being whom his subjects have heard but never seen.

The novel becomes an anthropological allegory touching on belief systems and cultural development through a plot twist makes it that staple of science fiction, the post-holocaust story. In this strand, The Stranger, a visitor from another Martian colony, represents the scientist who rejects blind faith to investigate artifacts and explain history. He discovers that the Martian myth of a Catastrophe (obviously paralleling Earth's flood myths) has an historical basis, that Mars was a green land inhabited by giants, and that the godlike voice directing Martians emanates from a computer that survived the destruction of the planet's atmosphere.

These pieces eventually fit together as well as the remnants of the original Martian civilization that The Stranger discovers, but the novel has weaknesses: it begins slowly; its addresses to the reader are awkward; the characters are too numerous to permit sufficient development; and the conclusion is anticlimactic. *Life on Mars* is not for everyone, but older readers will find in it both laughter and food for thought.

A Telling Adventure

The Story Box. Monica Hughes. HarperCollins, 1998. 166 pp. $12.95 paper. ISBN 0-00-648051-9.

As an indictment of intolerance, Monica Hughes's *The Story Box* is obviously a displaced version of the Salem witch trials. On the isolated island of Ariban, the elders forbid not only storytelling, as did seventeenth-century puritans, but implausibly, dreaming itself. Afraid that the young who hear tales of other lands will desert their homes, the elders do not allow strangers on the island. The citizens of Ariban thus follow a blinkered empiricism in which the only truth is that of the senses and the whole of life consists of "Birthing, growing, marrying, dying" (19). To such stark pragmatists, stories are lies, and dreams are sins.

The plot is predictable romantic fare, pitting a young boy, Colin, against his community. After Colin finds Jennifer, a storyteller, washed ashore during a storm, he sees that her stories enable his sister to control her nightmares and make him question his culture's values. Eventually, Colin must save Jennifer from execution and flee Ariban with her. Hughes deepens this plot by focusing on Colin's internal debate between loyalty to his traditions and his growing resentment of Ariban's intolerance. In doing so, Hughes refuses to make Colin stereotypically heroic: he is susceptible to prejudices, prone to self-serving lies, blind to consequences, but impulsively brave and ultimately noble.

Thematically, Hughes has only limited success in celebrating stories as a form of truth that is both therapeutic and inspirational. The ban on dreaming is so implausible that the emphasis on stories as a way of handling bad dreams carries little force. Furthermore, Jennifer's stories are not imaginatively gripping; they are pedestrian fairy tales that present thinly

disguised versions of their listeners in order to offer advice. Finally, Jennifer, the advocate of imagination, appears primarily through the eyes of an uncomprehending Colin, so her ideas and character lack substance. In fact, Hughes conducts the argument against dictatorial empiricism not so much by making stories attractive as by making their opponents repulsive. Colin's betrothed, for example, is manipulative, scheming, and vengeful: repeatedly she implicitly threatens Colin by reminding him that her grandfather is a ruling elder. Hughes is even more heavy-handed with that grandfather, making him a callous patriarch who sneers at Jennifer's matrilineal culture, and a diabolical tyrant with cold, dry hands like those of a snake's skin and a voice that hisses the order for Colin to burn Jennifer's books.

The Story Box is an enjoyable adventure, but its failure to suggest that heroes can do more than run away from social injustice makes it a somewhat hollow attack on narrow-minded pragmatism.

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Dancing with the Past

Bone Dance. Martha Brooks. Douglas and McIntyre, 1997. 179 pp. $9.95 paper. ISBN 0-88899-296-3.

The reader enters *Bone Dance* through two epigraphs provided by Martha Brooks. The first epigraph is a quotation from Chief Seattle's address to the president of the United States in 1855, and the second is taken from Sharon Butala's *The Perfection of the Morning: An Apprenticeship in Nature.* Brooks attempts to depict the spiritual power of the land of Manitoba in her novel, as anticipated by the quotation from Butala's book. In addition, she stresses the interconnectedness of the earth and its inhabitants, a concept highlighted in the words from Chief Seattle's address. The two quotations together suggest the connection of the land of the past with the land of the present.

The spiritual qualities of the landscape as depicted by Brooks are a little disappointing, particularly after hopes are raised by these epigraphs. Lonny, the young male character, is haunted by his childhood desecration of a burial site, which he associates with the subsequent death of his mother. Brooks conveys Lonny's pain and guilt for this irreverent event, and its supposed punishment, with the intensity and regret of the adolescent looking back at a thoughtless action. The reader is immediately sympathetic. Less successful, however, is the treatment of the manifestation of Lonny's guilt in the "damn spirits" that haunt him. In an attempt to avoid identifying or limiting the spirits in any way, the author treats them vaguely, thus remain-

ing true to the mysterious and fleeting qualities of the ghosts, but perhaps sacrificing clarity in doing so.

Alex, who dreams about her dead grandfather, is similarly affected by the spirits of those who have died. One of the most memorable and moving moments takes place early in the novel in the city when Alex and her friends "[throw] back their heads and ... howl[ed]. Like feral creatures." It is at this moment that Alex knows that her grandfather has died. She watches as "her own breath rose in front of her astonished eyes, took form and floated like a spirit hand on the crystal air." When Alex's father, whom she has never known, dies and gives her the land formerly belonging to Lonny's stepfather, the reader expects the father-daughter relationship to establish itself through the sharing of the land and its spiritual power. This, however, is not the case. Alex seems to learn more about her father from the inside of the cabin — "a thin trail of her father's life was scattered throughout the cabin" — than from the outside. Although there are many perceptive and effective descriptions of the Manitoba landscape, some of which are extremely evocative, the land itself does not play the integral role expected by the reader.

The relationships between Lonny and Alex and the older generations are very well developed and will have quite an impact on the adolescent reader. It is appropriate that the book is dedicated to the author's daughter and the author's daughter's grandfather. This is the relationship that seems to inspire and move the story forward. Alex's love for her grandfather is very believable and poignant in its intensity. Lonny's relationship with his stepfather, Pop, is based on a remarkable complexity that enriches their lives together. Alex's relationship with her mother also rings true. The two adolescents are drawn together by the dead parents, who, to some extent, are rooted in the land they leave behind, but it is here that the novel begins to lose some of its vibrant and sincere tone. What is certain, however, is that Martha Brooks will touch her readers with the spiritual connections between the younger and older generations, between the recent past and the present, between then and now.

Sharing a Dream of Peace and Harmony

Echoes from the Square. Elizabeth Wellburn. Illus. Deryk Houston. Rubicon Publishing Inc., 1998. 32 pp. $18.95 cloth. ISBN 0-921156-99-5.

In 1992 Vedran Smailovic played his cello for 22 days in a Sarajevo street amidst the devastation and upheaval of war in order to mourn and honour 22 people killed in that violence. Elizabeth Wellburn, moved by this heroic gesture, researched the event, becoming friends with Smailovic in the process. Wellburn then responded imaginatively to Smailovic's act as she explored its effect on her fictional character, Alen, a young musician growing up in the confusion and terror of war-torn Sarajevo. The story of Smailovic's heroic and compassionate act offers to the reader and to Alen a demonstra-

tion of the power of art, in this case music, to give voice to suffering and thus provide the means to heal and inspire. Deryk Houston's illustrations provide a further example of the power of art to convey a story, which, like the music, expresses sorrow, mourns loss and moves forward to the future.

The music in the story brings the individuals in the community together as they gather around to listen to Albinono's "Adagio," the piece played by Smailovic. Vedran explains to Alen that this piece survived as "a small fragment of a music script ... amongst the broken stones and dust" of an earlier war, and was tenderly recreated by Giazotto, a dreamer who "loved the good things of the past." This music, touched by the violence of war and the compassion and imagination of the artist, in turn becomes the inspiration for those in need of the care and healing that it once received. The music also brings Vedran into Alen's life and into the home of his family. The story emphasizes the rather strange and unexpected opportunities provided by war: "In another time and place it might seem unusual to invite a stranger into your home, but a war can change many things."

Wellburn's style is calm and understated, focusing on the child's internal bewilderment, lack of knowledge and quiet fear rather than the external terrors and horrors of war. The changes in the appearance and style of the text provide the structure of the book with movements, reinforcing the musical motif. The city before the war is described in the past tense; once the war arrives, we are faced with the present tense, which provides an immediacy to Alen's experience. Finally, Vedran's words in reddish-brown italics lend his voice the power of a prophet or at least a sage. Houston's illustrations are also grouped into sections or movements. The first two illustrations delineate the colour, light and symmetry of the "well-tended and loved" pre-war city. Subsequent illustrations portray the brokenness of the once vibrant city. A series of three illustrations of Smailovic playing in the square becomes increasingly powerful as it attempts to delineate the inspiration and strength surrounding the man and his music. Material before and after the actual story directs the reader to the factual background of Sarajevo and Smailovic. Although fairly didactic, this information does enhance the story and acknowledges Smailovic as a partner in its creation. Wellburn's intentions for the story to act as an instigator for peace in the minds of its young readers are apparent in the on-line resources she provides to support the study of *Echoes from the Square*. She first read of Smailovic on the internet and continues to use the internet to promote his inspiring story. A search into the author's and artist's websites rewards the reader with links to information on peace, music and art.

Echoes from the Square is a powerful book which attempts quite admirably to celebrate human heroism and the role of art and the artist. The grounding of this story in a true event provides the book with a validity and relevance that will impress the young reader. Alen's story incorporates a personal point of view, giving a name, voice and face to a conflict far from the reader's place and experience. Even though the young reader may not know about the cultural and political background of the conflict in Sarajevo, he or

she will respond to the universal power of music, an act of pure creation set in a place of utter devastation. In addition, the young reader may be inspired to search for more information about Alen's homeland. Wellburn and Houston obviously hope that the story instills in the reader an appreciation for the powerful inspiration of art and a desire for peace, particularly for the world's children. The message and the music echo and reverberate in the reader's mind.

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Reviews in this issue / Ouvrages recensés