

Le texte indique alors à la classe des expériences à faire pour rechercher la question. Les résultats sont mis en fiches selon les méthodes scientifiques et des conclusions en sont tirées par les élèves. A la fin d'une unité de travail, l'élève répond à des questions qui font le point sur les recherches réalisées. Voici la dernière question: "Qu'as-tu appris au cours de cette recherche? Décris-le sur ta fiche de rapport."

On pourrait utiliser cette série pour l'immersion en secondaire, et peut-être en 11^e-13^e années de cours de français comme supplément aux textes strictement littéraires.

D.M. Paramskas teaches in the Department of Languages and Literatures (French section) at the University of Guelph.



Contemporary Novels for Canadian Teenagers

SUSAN KILBY

A Year for Growing, Karleen Bradford. Illus. by Charles Hilder. Scholastic-TAB Publications, 1977. 137 pp. \$1.05 paper.

My Mother Made Me!, Sharon Brain. Scholastic-TAB Publications, 1978. 122 pp. \$1.25 paper.

This Can't Be Happening at Macdonald Hall!, Gordon Korman. Illus. by Affie Mohammed. Scholastic-TAB Publications, 1978. 124 pp. \$1.15 paper.

These three teenage novels put out by Scholastic-TAB are highly recommended for inclusion in a senior elementary or junior high school library. They each give an authentic flavour of Canadian life, yet concern themselves with topics broad enough to appeal to young people everywhere. This is each author's first endeavour in the field of popular young people's literature.

In *My Mother Made Me!* Sharon Brain tackles the issue of Women's Liberation through the vehicle of whether girls should be allowed to break into that traditionally all-male sanctuary, ice hockey. A group of 13-year-

old girlfriends are pawns in their mothers' all-consuming desire to have them play the game. They themselves, on the other hand, don't want to play hockey. As the mothers become more involved in the cause, the girls become desperate and resort to the somewhat drastic measure of running away together. Since this occurs during the summer holidays, they hide in the least likely place – their own small town hockey arena. After two or three days, following appeals on the local radio station to come home, and after promises from the hockey executive to reconsider its policies, the problem is nicely resolved. We learn in the epilogue that the girls' resistance to hockey fades away as they discover the pleasures of the game; and the men and boys in the town grudgingly recognise that the girls are competent. Girls' and mixed leagues are formed and the issue is overcome.

Other minor plots surround the central theme of the novel to provide wider appeal – the narrator's first kiss, her envy for her cousin who is older and beautiful, a friend's continual confrontations with her own mother who espouses "causes", and the taunting by the town's young folk of the incompetent local policeman. It is worth noting that Brain manages to instill a lightheartedness in the handling of the main and minor issues of the novel so that the reader is not deluged with the morbid sense of hopelessness which characterizes so many teenage books. The issue is serious enough but, she seems to be saying, let's not lose our sense of humour – being resolute does not mean one has to be depressed as are so many characters in contemporary teenage fiction.

In *A Year for Growing* by Karleen Bradford we are presented with a universal problem in a distinctly Canadian setting. Robbie, a boy of fourteen, is sent to live with his grandfather for a year in the Ontario bush near Owen Sound while his parents go to Pakistan on sabbatical. Whereas Brain deals with a cause, Bradford concerns herself with human relationships. Specifically, how are Robbie and his grandfather going to get along for a year with so many differences between them? Robbie comes from lively, bustling Montreal, his grandfather loves the bush; Robbie is a young teenager, his grandfather is an old man; Robbie thinks hunting and fishing are unnecessary and inhumane sports, his grandfather is an expert hunter and fisherman who regards Robbie's views as effeminate; Robbie brings Miktoo, his cat, and his grandfather does not like cats. In short, the relationship kicks off to a bad start, but Robbie gradually settles down in his new school, and his cat and grandfather's dog develop a grudging respect for one another. Robbie learns, too, that hunters can be the most conscientious of conservationists. He and his grandfather discover that they share a mutual love for wildlife and for stories about the wilderness. The boy is intrigued with tie-flying and happily discovers that he has a remarkable ability for this art. He becomes expert enough to win a television contest. The prize is a week's fishing trip for two at a remote northern lake which is accessible only by airplane. The trip, which Robbie undertakes with his grandfather, is the setting for the real turning point in

their relationship. They form a deep, loving bond which is heightened by the resourcefulness Robbie displays when his grandfather breaks an arm. Respect for one another builds as each realises that his survival depends on the other. By the time Robbie has to return to Montreal he is reluctant to leave and grandfather, too, is saddened by the boy's imminent departure.

The chief merit of Bradford's novel lies in her characterization. The reader develops a true sympathy for both Robbie and his grandfather, and can feel the initial conflicts giving way as the relationship progresses. To paraphrase grandfather, both do "a fair bit of growing" during their year together. Bradford's insight into the teenage mind and the old man's view of things is to be admired. A warmth pervades the book which is not insincere or sentimental, but honest and controlled. The few illustrations by Charles Hilder have a northern or 'bush' flavour which helps the citybound reader to visualise the setting.

From the small town concerns of reluctant female hockey players, and from the harsh reality of facing life alone with grandfather for a year in Canada's "north", we turn to an entirely different situation and setting. Gordon Korman's novel *This Can't be Happening at Macdonald Hall!* is a hilarious account of the antics of two boys, Bruno and Boots, at an Ontario boarding school for boys. This high-class private school, which has among its pupils members of the Canadian elite, is the setting for the most unlikely and most inventive escapades these two pranksters can dream up. Their headmaster is so completely frustrated with their behaviour during a hockey game against a rival school (they steal the opponent's mascot who then produces five kittens in their dorm) that he separates them. They are no longer permitted to communicate with one another in any way and least of all to continue being roommates. Needless to say, this prohibition does not deter them. They meet nightly at 2 a.m. by the school cannon, devising ways to get back together and rid themselves of their two new insufferable roommates. Their highly creative plans invariable fail and each one drives them into further disgrace. Even when they enlist the cooperation of the girls from the nearby Miss Scrimmage's Finishing School for Young Ladies they find themselves in the headmaster's office sitting on the "humiliation" bench while being threatened with expulsion and worse consequences.

They are of course finally reinstated with full privileges at the school, but through an entirely unforeseen event. During one of their many fruitless discussions by the school cannon they hear noises from a tree overhead. These prove to be cries for help from the son of the Malbonian ambassador. The child has drifted down from Ottawa in a runaway helium balloon; Bruno and Boots rescue him and summon help. They are rewarded with a special ceremony and commended by the Board; hence their reinstatement in school.

The story is a frenzy of hilarious activity from the first page to the last. One imagines the author, a 13-year-old public school boy himself, is recording his fantasies of what a private boarding school might be like and of some of

the characters and situations one might enjoy there. While the content of the novel makes no claim to reality – it is purely entertaining, funny and fast-moving – it has nevertheless a distinctly Canadian stamp to it; you know that you are not in an American or British boarding school. The merit of this novel lies less in the characterization than in the sheer imagination Korman possesses in inventing capers for the two boys to perform. It is sure to appeal to any child who goes to school.

It is to be hoped that the three writers will be sufficiently encouraged with their initial successes to continue supplying their young readership with subsequent work of equally good quality. As teachers and librarians are only too well aware, the demand for good teenage literature is inexhaustible, and it is reassuring to see Canadian authors enter this field hitherto dominated by fine American and British writers.

Susan Kilby has been teacher-librarian at Dalewood Senior Public School in Hamilton for the past four years.



The Adolescent Paperback – Canadian Style

VERNA REID

Susie Q, Eric Wilson. Scholastic-TAB, 1978. 162pp. \$1.15 paper.

No Way Back, Bill Bleeks. Scholastic-TAB, 1978. 116pp. \$1.15 paper.

One of the major success stories in the American publishing business has been the promotion of the adolescent paperback. Firms such as Dell, Avon, Pocket Books and Bantam have been doing “land-office” business producing books for the same early-teen market which has spelled big business for fast food chains, Disco operators, jean stores, and record, film and T.V. producers. If one strolls through the youth section of any paperback wholesaler in either the United States or Canada, one will encounter shelf after shelf of highly coloured jackets with titles designed to catch the reader’s eye: *Tuned Out*, *Leap Before You Look*, *Are You In The House Alone?* *Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack*. Booksellers grab them up; librarians have waiting lists of readers.