cadeaux échangés (une étoile de mer, une montre aux initiales), les aventures partagées (les courses de chèvres à l'hôtel Hilton le dimanche, les combats de coqs), les confidences, les secrets — tout cela établit entre ces jeunes protagonistes une amitié qui leur sera précieuse à tous les deux. Quand Grégoire réussit à marcher seul pour la première fois depuis son accident, le lecteur comprend clairement l'importance de l'amitié quand il s'agit d'affronter un problème sérieux dans la vie.

Paule Daveluy, l'auteur de ces deux livres intéressants, descend de la génération des pionniers de l'époque du curé Labelle. Elle est née dans le Témiscamingue, à Ville-Marie, en 1919, et a fait son entrée sur la scène littéraire québécoise avec un roman psychologique intitulé *L'Eté enchanté* qui a reçu, en 1958, le Prix de l'A.C.E.L.F. Son roman *Drôle d'automne* a reçu le Prix des Libraires du Québec en 1962, *Cet hiver-là* a reçu le Prix de la Province de Québec en 1968, et en 1972 Daveluy a reçu le Prix Michelle Le Normand de la Société des Ecrivains Canadiens pour l'ensemble de son oeuvre.

D'autres livres du genre "roman psychologique" de Daveluy sont *La maison des vacances* (1977, Fides), *Rosanne et la vie* (1977, Fides), *Sylvette et les adultes, Sylvette sous la tente bleue* et *Cinq filles compliquées* (1980, Scholastic-TAB). Daveluy a aussi traduit les livres de Jean Little, Barbara Smucker, Elizabeth Yates et Farley Mowat. Elle a participé à la fondation de l'Association canadienne pour l'avancement de la littérature de jeunesse.

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TREMULOUS TIMES

Miss P. and me, Florence McNeil. Clarke, Irwin, 1982. 124 pp. $10.95 cloth. ISBN 0-7720-1374-8; also published by Scholastic-TAB, 1982. ISBN 0-590-71050-8. ***Beautiful dreamer,*** Allen Morgan. Kids Can Press, 1982. 109 pp. $3.95 paper. ISBN 0-919964-44-3.

There are vulnerable moments all females recognize from the cross-over years of twelve and thirteen: the first junior high dance when the only boy to ask us to dance is the class "grosser"; the gym class where we are reminded once again that most of the other girls have developed bumps in front and we are still flat as an ironing board; the special birthday where the cake we make turns out to have twice the right amount of baking powder. Two recent Canadian novels for girls, *Miss P. and me* by Florence McNeil, the West Coast poet, and *Beautiful dreamer* by Allen Morgan, recreate this tremulous time when one's

self-esteem is a very fragile commodity indeed.

Miss P. and me is essentially a school story in which the coming of a new gym teacher, a tap dancing fan of Fred Astaire, prompts Jane, the thirteen-year-old narrator, to attempt to master the art of dancing fast enough to keep a part in the school musical. Unfortunately, Jane is uncoordinated and does no better than she did as a youngster in her mother's dance class. The theme of the story is, in part, "If at first you don't succeed, quit" or, as another of Jane's teacher's puts it "We can't all be good at the same thing." Jane is actually very good at writing, and by the end of the novel decides to concentrate on what she can do.

Obviously, readers in their early teens would emphathize with Jane the Klutz, who learns to accept her limitations. Apart from possessing this basic appeal, the novel is interesting in that it ventures some indirect social commentary on such things as the current trend to pop psychology (Jane's friend Maryanne recommends a how-to-do-it psychology manual entitled *You can do anything you want)* and on the success-oriented family. Jane's father and mother have precious little time for Jane because of their preoccupation with the father's construction company and the mother's dance studio. The mother in particular is shown as a hard-edged individual and Florence McNeil laudably resists the temptation to soften her in order to provide a happy ending; this is an open-ended novel in which Jane is left to depend on her own resources.

Moreover, Ms. McNeil challenges the usual plot formula when she has Jane, the nice girl from a good home, STEAL a keepsake from Miss P. Jane, of course, eventually returns it but the valuable point is made that good kids sometimes do bad things.

Allen Morgan in *Beautiful dreamer,* her new novel for this age group, similarly includes a theft sequence which makes much the same point. This time, however, the thieving takes the form of shoplifting. Katie, the central character, and her friend Gale, are startled to discover that their school chum, Brenda, has been stealing from stores for some time. It is she who first gives them the idea, and because Brenda is a perfectly ordinary girl next door, shoplifting all of a sudden does not seem so bad. Katie and Gale try it and are surprised to discover how easy it is:

> The saleslady put down the first sample and picked up another. While she was putting some on Gale's wrist, Katie passed her hand over the first bottle and palmed it. A moment later it was safely out of sight in her pouch.
>
> Gale was amazed to see how easy it was. She suddenly realized that nobody was going to catch them. As they were leaving the store she pulled Katie over to the candy counter.
>
> "I'm going to try it too," she whispered. She stepped up and ordered a pound of jelly beans. While the saleslady turned her back to weigh them, Gale filled her pouch with candy bars and lifesavers from the display. Then she paid for her jelly beans and she and Katie left the store.
>
> They were giggling by the time they reached the sidewalk. Everyone stared but they

didn't care. The whole thing was so crazy that nothing seemed to matter anymore.

A chance discovery at home and a guilty conscience prompt them to smuggle the goods back into the store, and while a suspicious clerk questions them, they get away with it: " 'I'll never do that again!' said Gale as they got back on the bus."

This episode serves a double purpose in the novel. First, it conveys the reassuring, if somewhat trite, message that everyone makes mistakes and that one can learn from one's mistakes. Of more interest perhaps is the picture it gives of the world of the twelve-year-old in Vancouver. Shoplifting there, as in other large cities, is the most universal form of theft and the great middle class crime. In this consumer society, it is a temptation that is particularly seductive to young adults, who, bombarded with advertising, have to cope with the urge to buy and with having very little disposable income. As *Beautiful dreamer* makes clear, it isn't the criminals primarily who do the shoplifting, but shoplifting can make one a criminal.

So Allen Morgan is venturing in *Beautiful dreamer* into the area of social realism. This is not, however, a novel of violence, sex or death like many of the current young adult paperbacks, but a quiet, rather charming story of ordinary family life. Katie, the twelve-year-old, is the youngest in a family of three. Max, the father, is a widower who drives a taxi and still thinks of Katie as a baby. Katie of course resents this and struggles to achieve equal respect in the family. By the end of the story she demonstrates her competence in the good, old Canadian way — by making money. She and her friend Gale set up a small business called (what else) "Beautiful Dreamers" and she vindicates herself by contributing fifty dollars to the family cookie jar at a critical moment. Then her father finally says, "You've grown up a lot when I wasn't looking."

In many ways, this little book is a true barometer of the eighties. Gone is the affluent society, and the parallel, lofty rejection of material values by the adolescent. Money is a scarce and desirable commodity for Katie and her family; Katie has a paper route and has a difficult time collecting from her customers. (I am sure many of the teenage readers will recognize both the difficulty *and* the customers). The transmission goes in Max's cab and the week's fares are depleted. And, like millions of other Canadians, Katie takes a flyer on the Western Express lottery, and learns the hard way that "there is no such thing as a free lunch." Easy success comes to Katie only in the dream sequences with which several chapters end. These are the weakest parts of the novel; the writer is much more convincing when portraying everyday realities.

It is the portrayal of these realities which constitute the chief source of appeal of these two novels. Some young adult readers, accustomed to the more extreme stories of rape, death, sexual experimentation and family trauma which are the hallmarks of such of the Y.A. paperback trade, may find *Miss P. and me* and *Beautiful dreamer* very tame by comparison. Many more young readers

will, I think, find delight in discovering their own time and place faithfully rendered.

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VICTOIRE DE LA RAISON SUR LA SUPERSTITION

La montagne des disparus, Bertrand Simard. Illustré par Peter Archambault, Moncton, Editions d'Acadie, 1982. 146 pp. 4,60$ broché. ISBN 2-7600-0068-0.

Les oeuvres écrites pour la jeunesse cherchent souvent un dépaysement facile et conventionnel dans des mondes imaginaires où le héros, disposant de moyens presque illimités, fait encore preuve de qualités surhumaines. Ce n'est assurément point le cas de *La Montagne des disparus* de Bertrand Simard.

La Montagne des disparus est un récit d'aventure bien conduit en ce sens que le problème est clairement posé. L'atmosphère d'inquiétude, de mystère et de peur, adroitement créée par petites touches successives, est tour à tour entretenue et tempérée par une série de scènes et d'incidents pittoresques, amusants ou dramatiques, judicieusement alternés, jusqu'au dénouement brutal. Le mouvement de l'action résulte de la lutte entre les forces de la superstition aveugle et peureuse, d'une part, et, d'autre part, celles de la raison courageuse qui finit par triompher.

La cadre est magnifique: la forêt, la montagne, les plateaux, la cascade, la nature à l'état sauvage, inviolée, dangereuse, aux confins du Nouveau-Brunswick et du Québec.

Sur le territoire d'une commune rendue hostile par la force de croyances superstitieuses, les héros, deux jeunes hommes, originaires du Nouveau-Brunswick, liés d'une belle amitié virile, sympathiques, entreprenants, hardis, débrouillards, encore quelque peu potaches, Bertrand, le narrateur, et Robert, mènent avec leurs propres moyens l'enquête sur de mystérieuses disparitions. En dépit de nombreux traits communs, les deux amis sont pourtant assez bien différenciés: mieux entraîné à la survie dans la nature, Bertrand, en bon militaire qu'il est, paraît plus décidé, plus fort physiquement; Robert, ancien professeur d'éducation physique, venu à la terre, se distingue par une conception plus personnelle de l'art de vivre et par un antimilitarisme discret.

L'intrigue, capable de passionner des adolescents, s'enrichit de thèmes secondaires qui situent le récit dans le temps et dans l'espace: les deux héros ont fait leurs études ensemble à l'Université de Moncton (présentée sous un jour très favorable); il est question de villes et de sites bien connus en Acadie, comme Chatham, Bathurst, le Parc national de Fundy; Robert est en train de se con-