86-87) is admittedly imaginary, but surely students should be taught that the eighteenth century differed from our era, and that such joint interviews were simply not part of the eighteenth century scene. On page 83 the photo captions for Sir George Simpson and William Lyon Mackenzie are reversed. It is noted on page 74 that "all cabinet ministers must be elected members of the Commons and available for questioning by other members. . ." Both Prime Minister Abbott and Prime Minister Bowell led the country from the Senate. Prime Minister Trudeau's last cabinet included powerful ministers like Bud Olson and Hazen Argue who were senators.

Origins is nicely illustrated and makes a number of valid and useful points. This reviewer's concern is that it is an inadequate introduction to Canadian history. That inadequacy is almost certainly explained by the book's basic conceptualization, which is based not on the state of the art of the discipline of history but on government policy and folk wisdom.

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IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

Rebecca's Nancy, Joan Reimer Goman. Scholastic-TAB, 1982. 48 pp. $1.95 paper. ISBN 0-590-71149-0; ***Michi's New Year,*** Shelley Tanaka. Illus. Ron Berg. Peter Martin Associates Ltd., 1980. 32 pp. $6.95 cloth. ISBN 0-8878-205-1; ***Pettranella,*** Betty Waterton. Illus. Ann Blades. Douglas & McIntyre, 1980. 28 pp., $8.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88894-237-0.

The story of a child uprooted from a familiar world, transported across expanses of land or sea, and then deposited in an environment that is physically, socially, and psychologically alien is a promising subject for children's literature. The theme may be treated in a variety of ways, ranging from thinly disguised autobiography to romantic adventure. When the child differs in race and culture from the majority of people in the new homeland, the process of adaptation requires an adjustment of perspective, not only geographically but also socially. Alienation provides the problem, reconciliation the solution. Because Canada, in contrast to the United States, has not insisted on the melting pot approach to immigrants, the expression of ethnic distinctiveness is not limited to the immigrant generation. Nevertheless, Canadian children's books dealing with minorities are most often set in the past, an orientation that allows author and artist an opportunity to provide nostalgic recollection (often of their own childhoods) while conveying to young readers an impression of "olden days" life.

The heroine of *Rebecca's Nancy* belongs to a large family that has settled

in Waterloo County on land acquired by Pennsylvanian Mennonites. Through the device of the child's search for her lost doll, a gift from her dead grandmother, the daily routine of life in rural Ontario is revealed. It is a simple story intended for young readers — but not simple enough. The unnecessarily large cast of characters includes fifteen living people mentioned by name and allusions to the dead as well. Since only two or three have a dramatic role to play, the superficial prolixity is confusing. Furthermore, the author fails to convey a specifically Mennonite flavour. Attending a one-room school, riding in a horse-drawn wagon, and going to bed by lamp-light characterized the life of farm children in all parts of Canada until very recent times.

The plebeian text is accompanied by full page illustrations in a style suggesting "Berlin Woolwork," the embroidery pictures created by wool stitches on canvas (fig. 1). By varying the stitch, the artist creates a diversity of patterning.

Figure 1

Nancy's honeycomb boots, the wavy roof of the "doddy house," Mrs. Brubachen's woven apron, and the feather's of Rebecca's pet goose are effectively differentiated. The collage, reflecting a folk art style, is appropriate to the subject. The large, two dimensional figures that fill the picture plane are conspicuous not only because of their size but also because they are set against a monochrome background that eliminates perspective. Unfortunately, the effect of these illustrations is undermined by the restriction to sepia tones. While such a mode, recalling old photographs, might be pleasantly nostalgic in an adult book, the "brown-ness" has a depressing effect in a book for children. In addition, the illustrations are so badly printed that the image often loses the differentiations of texture that must have been present in the original collage.

Michi's New Year describes the feelings of a ten-year-old who has travelled by ship from Japan to a new life in Vancouver. The year is 1912. Michi, too, has a doll Yuki that, with her black bang, rosy kimono, and cheek scratched during the voyage, represents both the traditional culture and the threatening aspects of the new world. As she sits disconsolately in the rain, Michi addresses her doll:

"It's New Year's Day, Yuki... Back in Japan this day was the best day of the whole

year. But today isn't any fun at all. Nothing has been fun since we came to Canada." (fig. 2)

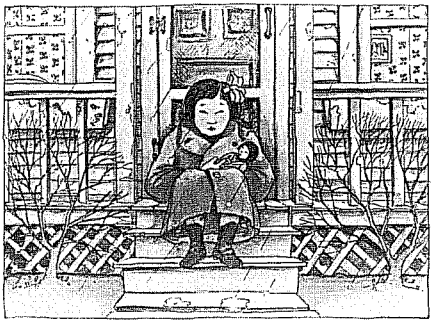

Figure 2

Shelley Tanaka's text and Ron Berg's illustrations beautifully complement one another in revealing the child's perceptions, recollections, and anticipations. The soft reds of the tiled roofs and kimonos, the crowded, elaborately decorated Ginza, the lush green garden of the old home where Michi and her friends had played hago-ita evoke a warm and sociable Oriental world. In comparison, the wintery Vancouver street with its dilapidated houses, wooden sidewalks, and leafless trees depicted in dull tones is ugly and inhospitable, leading Michi to conclude that "Canada is big and dirty and lonely."

The process of adaptation begins when a sandy-haired boy on a creaky bicycle calls out, "Happy New Year." The picture, like Michi's face, is magically lightened. The rain stops; Japanese friends arrive with gifts and share the traditional feast (fig. 3). Vancouver is seen to be more than a muddy street when the friends reveal the prospect of visits to Stanley Park and clam-digs on the beach. Michi realizes that emigration does not mean giving up forever the best aspects of the old life but rather the opportunity of enjoying them in a more propitious environment.

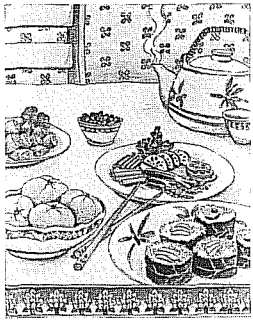

Figure 3

This is a far more satisfactory book than *Rebecca's Nancy* not only because the author's skillful use of sensory details creates tangible worlds but also because Ron Berg's illustrations are accomplished without being too sophisticated for a children's book. They owe something to a type of Japanese

genre painting that became popular in the west in the late nineteenth century — the coloured woodcut print. With its enormous wave about to overwhelm the tiny ship, the book's cover makes obvious allusion to a print of Hokusai's "The Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji." Though the colour range is limited (as in most print making), there is no sense of restriction. The style is appropriate to the period of the text, even to the "art nouveau" floral borders. An added virtue of this beautifully produced book is its size; at 5 inches by 6 it is delightfully manageable in a child's small hands.

Pettranella is another product of the fruitful collaboration between author Betty Waterton and illustrator Ann Blades whose *A salmon for Simon* won the Canadian Association of Children's Librarians Illustration Award and the Canada Council Award for Children's Literature in 1978. The story centres on a child whose parents decide to exchange an upstairs apartment in a European industrial city for a homestead in Manitoba. The link between the old world and the new is provided by a bag of flower seeds, a gift from Pettranella's grandmother who is too old to emigrate. Unfortunately, when the oxcart in which the family is travelling across the prairies breaks a shaft, the child loses her seeds. She is disconsolate, though her disappointment is forgotten at the sight of their own land. A small cabin is built; a piece of ground is prepared for a vegetable garden; the honking of geese signals the arrival of spring. On a warm Sunday the family sets out to visit new neighbours. And suddenly, beside the rocky track where the cart had broken down, a miracle: (fig. 4)

Figure 4

There they were, blowing gently in the breeze, their bright faces turned to the sun and their roots firm in the Canadian soil — Grandmother's flowers. . . .

"You can plant them beside our house" said father, "and make a flower garden there."

Pettranella did, and she tended it carefully, and so her promise to her grandmother was not broken after all.

But she left some to grow beside the trail that other settlers might see them and not feel lonely.

The text is carefully organised to reveal the transition from the cold and darkness of winter in a smoky city to the promise of spring on the prairies where the red-winged blackbirds sing, a wobbly-legged calf is born, and the air smells freshly of spruce and tamarack. Sorrow gives way to joy, regret to

anticipation. The pain of separation, hardships, and loss (which small children can understand) is alleviated by the symbols of seed and blossom.

Ann Blades' full page watercolours perform an essential role in creating specifically a sense of time and place. Grey stone houses with rows of shuttered windows; lamplight falling on a round table; Grandmother's brightly striped apron, blue shawl and white cap; Pettranella's high black boots, black stockings, and long dress and coat; the kerchiefs, tall hats, and solemn peasant faces of the immigrants crowded into the customs shed provide both a period and an ethnic flavour. Blades has a recognizable style characterised by reliance on simplified form — the pencil-like parallels of birch trunks, rectangular buildings and boxes, the circles of cart wheels, table, and sunhat, and the wedge of geese. Colour is used emotively with greys and dull browns denoting the old life, pale blues and bright greens the new. The total effect of colour and form is one of liveliness and of wide-ranging emotion as the child responds to her various environments. Both *Pettranella* and *Michi's New Year* are admirable picture-storybooks because they reflect creative cooperation on the part of author, illustrator and publisher, evidence of the high standard that Canadians are now achieving in this genre.

Muriel Whitaker *is a Professor of English at the University of Alberta where she is currently teaching courses on medieval literature. During the past summershe had an interesting "ethnic experience" when she spent a month in Romania. She and Jetske Ironside created a children's picture book,* Pernilla in the Perilous Forest *(Oberon Press; Ottawa, 1979), and they are now engaged in collaborating on another similar project.*

NATIONAL SYMBOLS WITH FLAT FEET

The Canada goose, Judith Drynan. Illus. Laurie McGaw. Horizon Publishing, 1980. 33 pp. $10.95 cloth. ISBN 0-919157-17-3.

This little allegory was apparently based on an operetta of the same title with a text also by Judith Drynan, and its musical origins are evident both in the predominance of dialogue and in the songs scattered through the text. Some of these lyrics are more successful than others:

The Canada Goose!
The Canada Goose!
Touch his feathers and you won't come loose.
You can come along.
You can sing the song.
Sing the song of freedom with
The Canada Goose!