

# Many shoot, few score: hockey autobiographies and Canadian children's literature

*James Gellert*

In a 1976 article in *The Horn Book Magazine*, critic Milton Meltzer decries the lack of recognition of nonfiction as reflected in the American book awards for children's literature. Meltzer links this apparent oversight to the reluctance of the three groups who judge and administer the awards — librarians, teachers, and reviewers — to consider nonfiction as bona fide literature.<sup>1</sup> This same bias against nonfiction is evident in England, where the Carnegie Medal has been claimed by a nonfictional entry only five times in forty-two years, as well as in Australia and Canada, where nonfiction has fared only slightly better in national book competitions.<sup>2</sup> In spite of many good books,<sup>3</sup> all areas of nonfiction have experienced this neglect. One category of nonfiction, biography, has attracted special attention by commentators on children's literature. Denise M. Wilms, writing in a brief but thoughtful article on biography for children, argues that although biography has much to offer children, it is often marred by unskilled execution. "Moreover," adds Wilms, "the persistent weaknesses that mark these faulty life stories are perpetuated by the uncritical acceptance by teachers, librarians, and others who continue to put them into the hands of children."<sup>4</sup> This critical blind spot in children's literature is particularly evident in a subgenre of biographical nonfiction to which innumerable Canadian adolescents are unremittingly exposed winter upon winter: autobiographical hockey books.

As in the case of biography, there is a dearth of in-depth, critical evaluation of these books. In part, this is because many in the field of children's literature recognize that autobiography is rarely written for children,<sup>5</sup> presumably because of the limited appeal of what is often a scrupulously documented work. Autobiographical hockey books, however, belie this generalization. The latest entry into the market, Dave Williams' *Tiger: a hockey story*,<sup>6</sup> climbed as high as seventh on the *Maclean's* magazine best-seller list for nonfiction,<sup>7</sup> and Ken Dryden's *The game*<sup>8</sup> flourished for some fourteen weeks in the same category. Although the *Maclean's* polls do not verify an identifiable adolescent readership, a glance at the Christmas booty of Canadian teens (most hockey books are published to capitalize on the season of giving) corroborates the suspicion that the currency of hockey players with young Canadians is seen in more than the sales of hockey sweaters and blue jeans. My own survey of both public and high school libraries in Thunder Bay, Ontario, confirms this popularity, particularly with boys.<sup>9</sup>

If, as is suggested by the editors of the most recent edition of *Children and Books* in their section on sports stories, the popularity of individual sports is mirrored in children's books,<sup>10</sup> it should come as little surprise that books on the sport that author Morley Callaghan once termed "almost a religion"<sup>11</sup> in Canada, should dominate. Furthermore, although books such as Peter Gzowski's *The game of our lives*<sup>12</sup> and Jack Ludwig's *Hockey night in Moscow*<sup>13</sup> are incisive commentaries on hockey, the captive adolescent market is most susceptible to books written by those who have directly participated in the sport. As Bruce Kidd and John McFarlane demonstrate in their penetrating analysis of hockey in Canada, "the popular professional athlete remains the easiest vehicle with which to enter homes."<sup>14</sup> This truism of the advertising world is no more lost on publishers than on manufacturers of breakfast cereals. Sadly, what this often means is that the unskilled execution and cursory reviewing, common to nonfiction in general, are ubiquitous for autobiographical hockey books. The standards of both publishers and reviewers are less rigorous in respect to these books, as if in deference to their market potential and their lionized authors. Thus it is that a *Maclean's* review of Tiger Williams' book consists in the main of a superficial recounting of several colourful incidents in Williams' career, plus a closing reference to his tenacity as a player.<sup>15</sup> What the review is not is a meaningful guide by which a teacher, librarian, or parent might make an informed decision on the merits of the book. Nonfiction, autobiography included, should be evaluated as literature, and the critical standards applied to fiction should not be suspended by publishers or reviewers.

Through the efforts of critics and reviewers, criteria by which biography for children can be evaluated have been identified, as well as the most persistent flaws common to the genre. Both can serve as an instructive backdrop to the autobiographical sports books under scrutiny here. The criteria most consistently cited include the literary credentials of the writer and his handling of characterization, theme, structure, and style.

Teachers and librarians selecting biographies wish to have some indication of the author's credentials as a writer: his general reputation, as established in reviews of previous books. The same principle would apply to autobiographical hockey books. But many sports autobiographies are collaborations. Of the eight books consulted for this piece, only two were written without the active participation of a collaborator. Some of these co-writers do have established reputations (Scott Young and Stan Fischler for example), but others are not as well known. The principals in these writing teams, the athletes, are of course well known, but more for their skills on the ice or behind the bench rather than in front of a typewriter. This relative obscurity makes initial evaluation difficult. With the involvement of a collaborator, the essential "voice" of the athlete is often lost, and a lifeless narrative can emerge which combines the details of the subject's life in workaday journalese. Consider, for example, this account of the early days of Tiger Williams' courtship of his future wife as rendered

by Williams and his literary mentor, James Lawton:

But when I was eighteen, I was getting to be an old man, and I'd never had a steady broad. So I decided I had to find myself a lady. I went up to the school and I did a little surveying. . . . Some guys said that they wanted me to meet a friend, someone who was babysitting just across from the school. Her name was Brenda Dyck.

Brenda was very good for me. I used to like her family life. It was always quiet in her house. There was nice carpeting. Before she met me, she didn't know that hockey existed. She was one of four sisters. There were no sons in the house. (p. 55).

Sources and research methods are also significant matters in biography. In autobiography, the material obviously comes from the subject's experiences, but the question of how and when these experiences are recorded becomes paramount. Punch Imlach kept a detailed diary for his decades in hockey,<sup>16</sup> and consequently relates his triumphs and defeats with the rigid precision that system recommends. Coach Harry Sinden's *Hockey showdown*,<sup>17</sup> his account of the 1972 Canada-Russia series, is based on transcripts made while the games were being played. The result is an approach and tone suggestive more of a sportswriter for a daily newspaper than a reflective insider. Ken Dryden's *The game* began as "a boxful of scrap paper" which Dryden patiently metamorphosed into his unique view of the sport only after years of personal meditation and the necessary distancing from the original experience.<sup>18</sup> Tiger Williams' book and that of the Russian goaltender, Vladislav Tretiak,<sup>19</sup> are based on general recollections, arranged more or less chronologically. In each case, the athlete's true self is obscured by the obvious dedication to relating factual details and events. For example, we get very little genuine insight into Tretiak in this typical excerpt: "Hockey is a rough game. This is especially true for the goaltender. In the final analysis, the force and fury of the opposing team is directed him [sic]. . . . A slap shot zooms at the net with the velocity of an artillery shell. The goalie must either catch it with his glove or deflect it — with his stick, his skates, his body, anything at all. The goalie must block that shot" (p. 28). A comparative reference from Ken Dryden's book demonstrates a richer use of experience as a source.

When I talk to old friends who earn a thirty-year-old's average wage, they seem uncomfortable, or I do. For me, money, which seemed always a by-product, distant, even unrelated to the game, has taken on new importance. A cause of great bitterness and division, it brought me to retire for a year; a cold-eyed standard against which I judge my relationship with the team, and against which I am now in turn judged.

It is the other side of the Faustian bargain. For when a high-priced player, especially a free agent, comes to a team, he comes with a price tag — the "million dollar" ballplayer. It was the market that created the price tag, but now it's the price tag that he must live up to. So, with nothing more than a bigger bank account to make him a better player, he must play better, like a "million dollar" ballplayer, or be bitterly resented. For many, it's too much of a burden (p. 155).

Writers of nonfiction must display accuracy as to background material if the writer is to maintain credibility. An important difference between biography and autobiography is notable here: while fiction is often present in biography for children (either in a limited amount as in fictionalized biography or to a much greater degree in biographical fiction),<sup>20</sup> none can be tolerated in the autobiography. What becomes of Tretyak's plausibility when he refers to Hockey Canada representative, Alan Eagleson, as the "coach" of the 1977 version of Team Canada (p. 168)? On a more subtle level, the overall veracity of Punch Imlach's vision of professional hockey becomes suspect because of his relentless verbal badgering of players with whom he had disagreements in his career.<sup>21</sup> These matters of credibility are significant in all nonfiction, and in the hockey books surveyed here are more honoured in the breach than otherwise.

Although the distinction between "writer," and "character" is blurred in terms of the main character in autobiography, the fundamental considerations regarding characterization important in other genres of children's literature remain significant. American biographer Jean Fritz's caution that "not every life can become the subject of a biography, the lives of many people are just not compelling as story material,"<sup>22</sup> is something of an academic point in reference to sports autobiography, for as implied above, the writers are instinctively compelling for many juvenile readers. Also, since the writers of autobiography are contemporaries of the readers, they are, relatively speaking, well known. On the other hand, the authorial perspective which comes with writing about another character in other time is lost. What many readers would regard as true character development, then, never occurs. Harry Sinden's book, as one example, shows little in the way of his genuinely human side. Instead, we regard him as a stenographer of sorts, recording the details of the challenging business of playing an eight game series against the Russians, four in Canada, four in Russia, starring players such as Esposito, Henderson, and Clarke.

Given the potential for hockey autobiographies to reach a young Canadian audience, it is discouraging that in the group of authors discussed here, only Ken Dryden, and to a lesser extent, Don Cherry,<sup>23</sup> sufficiently develop their own characters in their books to reveal what it is truly like to be a part of professional hockey. Dryden emerges as a sensitive, thoughtful analyst, and it is impossible to miss his essential humanity as he ponders the sport, his role in it, and his teammates. Don Cherry, while at times appearing unconvincingly sanguine given the sundry minor catastrophes which have persistently dogged him throughout his career in hockey, surfaces as an engaging and genuinely funny man. There is humour in all of the books under discussion, but whereas others are merely recording comic events, Cherry is living them. The other leading characters in these sports autobiographies descend to the level of the uni-dimensional types found in many sports stories. Punch Imlach is the irasci-

ble, stubborn doyen of the coaching fraternity; Tiger Williams is the intense, blunt fighter, who survives on little skill and much tenacity; Harry Sinden is the calculating maestro who deftly orchestrates the great win of 1972; and Vladislav Tretyak is the personification of hard work and sacrifice, willingly channelled to meet the noble aims of the Soviet hockey program. The four principal characters in these autobiographies come through not as individuals but as stereotypes which correspond more to publicity images than to flesh and blood people.

Predictably, the depiction of minor characters is as superficial. Typical of this limited presentation is Harry Sinden's views on the controversial defections of some of the Team-Canada players in 1972. Commenting on the decision of several under-used young players to return home, Sinden writes, "This is the reaction of a kid, a baby. When things don't go your way, go in the corner and sulk. Or, in the case of these three, go back to your team where you'll be the star and everyone can fawn over you and make you feel wanted" (p. 92). It is interesting to compare Sinden's shallow analysis of these players with that of Punch Imlach who judges the same incident this way: "I don't blame them. If they weren't going to play, why the hell waste their time. These were two kids trying to get their bearings in the National Hockey League. . . Why would they want to be spectators? They wanted to get back to our own team, so they went. . . There they were in an alien situation, so they got depressed and thought, let's get back to the environment we know and love" (p. 59). In this instance Imlach has avoided the penchant of sports writers to ignore the human side of supporting characters, but he is not as magnanimous in all cases. For example, in an attempt to add a comic touch to his book, the ex-coach introduces a verbatim duplication of an expense account submitted by a French Canadian player written in fractured English (it is the player's broken English that transports Imlach into a laughing fit). The perfunctory addendum to the episode reads: "Réal only played eleven games for us and a few years later I was sorry to hear he had died, but his expense account lives on" (p. 79). This violent juxtaposition has all of the emotional balance of the proverbial singing telegram announcing the death of a relative, and leaves the reader questioning the sensibility of the writer.

If, as critic Jo Carr stresses, there is a place for "identification" with the characters in biography,<sup>24</sup> then there is surely a need for multidimensional, well-rounded characters with whom the young reader can identify in autobiography as well. Nonfiction has evolved towards realism and away from the teaching of "ponderous lessons to young readers."<sup>25</sup> The themes dealt with in biographies reflect this change. Nevertheless, some fundamental concerns have not changed. There is still an emphasis on to the essential human condition (in whatever context) and on universal ethical questions.

In all but Ken Dryden's book, the treatment of this integral ethical dimen-

sion is at best inadequate, and at worst hopelessly substandard. In Harry Sinden's *Hockey showdown*, it is difficult to detect any theme running through the book other than "the good guys won." Minor motifs are evident in Sinden's chronology, although few could be thought of as edifying for juvenile readers. Rather than offering broad and balanced reflections on the sport in the context of the series he coached, Sinden becomes a cynical proseletizer, as when he berates all those who lost confidence in Team Canada as the games against the Russians progressed: "We were thrown to the wolves, set up as the bad guys. We found many people we thought were friends kicking us when we were down . . . I feel sorry for these people. I know many of them, and they all have one thing in common — they're losers. And they'll be losers all their lives" (pp. 122-123).

The books by Punch Imlach, Tiger Williams, and Don Cherry display thematic cohesion to a degree, but the ideals these works uphold are dubious. For Imlach, his *idée fixe* that he is "a stubborn, tough bastard to deal with, but that's why I've been successful" is reiterated throughout the book. Williams, who recognizes his limitations in talent, continually defends his tactics of intimidation and violent play, equating them with being a devoted athlete. The abiding theme in Cherry's *Grapes* is that like some Shakespearian protagonist unloosed in the hockey world, he is forever precipitating his own disasters. Cherry absorbs each challenge in good humour, but what is disturbing are the attendant motifs which support this primary theme. Cherry reports so many incidents of hockey players fighting and drinking that if someone unfamiliar with the game were to read only his book, he would form the impression that a hard head and a constitution oblivious to the effects of alcohol are the only prerequisites of the Canadian hockey player. No one would deny that fighting and drinking are relevant concerns in professional hockey, but it is Cherry's opinion on these matters which is troubling. For example, with telling sang-froid — even with levity — he relates how a former teammate from his minor league days, one Mad Dog Madigan, assaulted a fellow player at a practice, caving the front of his mouth in with his stick and knocking out most of his teeth, simply because the unfortunate soul had failed to invite Mad Dog into his apartment as he made his Christmas rounds (p. 141). As Cherry documents similar stories throughout his book, it becomes clear that he subscribes to what Bruce Kidd and John Macfarlane term the "playpen" theory of hockey; "there is the playpen and there is the real world, and for the people in the playpen what happens in one has no bearing on the other." (pp. 146-47). The idea that professional hockey is exempt from all ethical judgement is antagonistic to the very principles which most literature for children and juveniles strives to incorporate.

The thematic emphases of Vladislav Tretyak are less subtle; he is essentially advocating the Russian approach to hockey over the Canadian. After repeated exposures to the benefits of Komosomol (Communist Youth League) meetings,

the sacrifices made by the selfless Russian players, and the dirty tactics of "the professionals" from Canada, Tretyak's dominant theme becomes the book's primary weakness. There are few insights for the juvenile reader in a work burdened with the motive of propagandizing a steadfastly held dogma.

In fairness to Tretyak, it should be noted that all but one of these autobiographies propagandize to a certain extent. The one exception is again Ken Dryden's *The game*. Dryden's theme is intrinsic in his concept of "the game". For Dryden, "the game" is an all encompassing metaphor, which is most clearly explicated in Dryden's account of a meeting with a former Montreal player, in which he understands the essence of the phrase:

I had always thought of it as a phrase interchangeable with "hockey," "baseball," any sport. But when Moore said it, I knew it wasn't. "The game" was different, something that belongs only to those who play it, a code phrase that anyone who has played a sport, any sport, understands. It's a common heritage of parents and backyards, teammates, friends, winning, losing, dressing rooms, road trips, coaches, press, fans, money, celebrity — a life, so long as you live it. Now as I sit here, slouched back, mellow, when I hear others talk of "the game," I know what Moore meant. It is hockey that I'm leaving behind. It's "the game" I'll miss (p. 236).

The specific values, ideals, triumphs and fears which Dryden explores through this metaphor are many. And significantly, these themes are sensitively and artfully developed in a manner that would be expected in other areas of juvenile literature.

Most biographies, including most sports biographies, are structured to present the highlights of the hero's career chronologically. This linear arrangement is conducive to relating a logical development over a span of a career, and in sports stories, presents an added benefit to the writer of being able to arrange game sequences in a climactic order. However, a strictly chronological structure can lead to an over-emphasis on factual content as opposed to broader concerns. Also, while action is necessarily dominant in sports stories, there is the danger of a dulling accumulation of similar episodes.

A good example of the possible limitations of predictable structure appears in Punch Imalch's two books. In spite of their being published some thirteen years apart, the same incidents are presented in virtually identical wording in both books.<sup>26</sup> Scant attention is paid to how the incidents or the wording might complement a larger creative design. It is this kind of unimaginative structure that moves reviewer Denise Wilms to rhetorically ask, "Does a strictly linear account of events that happened to or because of the person really constitute a biography?"<sup>27</sup>

The structure of Tiger Williams' book warrants special mention for it features a carefully devised juxtaposition between Williams' views and impressions, and the transitional commentaries of his collaborator, James Lawton. Although the book generally follows the typical chronology of most sports stories, there is something in the way of a fresh approach here.

In respect to the criterion of structure, however, it is Dryden's *The game* which once more proves exceptional. His book is not a linear chronicle, but as playwright Rick Salutin observes, a "weave of scenes, over boyhood and career, set within the apparent frame of a week in 1979 Stanley Cup play between Montreal Canadiens and the Philadelphia Flyers as recalled by a player. His stream of consciousness sketches players, patterns of childhood, the locker rooms, practices, even the techniques and skills of hockey."<sup>28</sup> The broader significance of Dryden's structure is that it is suited to his overall view of the sport, and like the criteria discussed above, is part of an organic concept. Unlike the other writers noted Dryden has suffused the bare facts with an overriding vision and an all inclusive emotion.

The extent to which each of the autobiographies succeeds as literature is ultimately a function of how skillfully the four criteria thus far analyzed work together in each. It is a fifth criterion, style, which ultimately provides the requisite cohesion, consistency, and fluidity necessary for any book to appeal to a critical reader. And most pertinently, the ease with which the writer's vocabulary and phrasing are matched to the subject is as essential in nonfiction as in fiction.

Wooden descriptions, such as the one which follows from Vladislav Tretyak's book, fail to demonstrate the drama of the sport or the nature of the player's involvement in it: "The Canadiens manage to break through our defense early in the game. They lead 2-0 after the first period. Our forwards are unable to organize a counterattack. We have no success with passing or team play. The Canadiens hold the edge in shots-on-goal, 10-4. In short, the first period is a total loss. . . We start the second period at a disadvantage. Zhluktov receives a two-minute penalty. I really have to work. It seems as if the Canadiens are trying to exceed the limits of their talent. One shot follows another; they are all powerful and accurate" (pp. 130-31). Tretyak's book is, of course, a translation from the Russian, and this might account for some of the choppy style.

No such excuse can be afforded Tiger Williams, who retells game sequences in a fragmented fashion, omitting most of the details save those which feature him fighting. Most of Don Cherry's and Punch Imlach's game descriptions are linked to the narratives, and reported in the order they occurred in real life, but they are stylistically weak in that they begin and end with their own *raison d'être* — description of a specific incident.

Ken Dryden, on the other hand, uses description to both capture the excitement of the moment and to suit a larger creative purpose. In the excerpt below, Dryden examines the pace of the game from a goalkeeper's viewpoint. He is lazily sweeping ice shavings away from his crease area, glancing at his bench or at the clock, fearing the lethargy that comes with inaction. Then an opposition player intercepts a pass, and "a jolt of panic goes through me. Quickly tightening into my crouch, winding tighter and lower as they get closer, my body telling my mind I'm ready. But I'm trying too hard, winding too tight,

too low. Thompson shoots the puck into the corner to my left. I chase back to the boards, but too slowly; the puck hits my stick, flips, and rolls past me. Scrambling for the net, I run into Robinson, knocking him away from the play. Libbett shoots the puck in front. My head snaps after it. For a dawdling, tortured instant, I see only blurred bodies — then the puck, on Lemaire's stick, moving slowly out of our zone" (p. 184). Dryden's account is not only convincing description; it is an inextricable part of his perspective on the contrasting slowness and frenetic speed of his sport.

Aspects of style such as exaggeration, lack of imagination, oversimplification, and sentimentality are present in most of the books covered here, but the single flaw most prevalent is the writers' penchant for awkward, stilted, and sometimes cliché-ridden language. While all of the writers of these hockey books are susceptible to these tendencies, no one quite matches Don Cherry on this score. Thus it is in *Grapes* we learn that one player is as "tough as nails," that another has been suspended for "punching out his coach," and a third, for Cherry, is "probably the funniest man I've ever met." Cherry's wife is "one in a million," an acquaintance of his father "nearly died on the spot," and Cherry needs fight-shy players "like a moose needs a hat rack." And when Cherry's team is "hammered" 9-1 in a home game, he insists on telling us what "really hit the fan."<sup>29</sup> It might be argued that some of this questionable style is designed to capture the true character of the writer, but after seeing it in virtually all of these hockey books, we realize that it is more a product of prescriptive formula writing. Nor should the collaborators and the editors be absolved here, for although it is a Don Cherry or a Punch Imlach who initiates the writing, they play a seminal role in allowing stylistic blemishes such as Imlach's "by the time I could move Sauvé out at New Year's, Hershey loudly did not want him to replace Edwards" (p. 105), to reach the reader.

To conclude this look at autobiographical hockey books, let me emphasize several points. First, many of the criteria relevant to nonfiction and more specifically to biography can provide a guide to evaluating autobiography. Secondly, given the popularity of autobiographical hockey books, it is sadly ironic that the problems of inferior writing and desultory editing are exacerbated by inconsistent reviewing and a paucity of critical commentary. The books analyzed for this paper, with the singular exception of Ken Dryden's *The game*, indicate the results of this neglect for an area of Canadian literature read by many juveniles. Finally, as implied in the article by Milton Meltzer cited at the beginning of this study, the standards of literary execution expected — indeed demanded — in other areas of children's literature must be sedulously applied to all nonfiction including that written by erstwhile hockey heroes.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Milton Meltzer, "Where do all the prizes go? The case for nonfiction," *The Horn Book Magazine*, February, 1976, 17- 23.
- <sup>2</sup>Betty Bacon, "The art of nonfiction," in *Jump over the moon*, ed. Pamela Petrick Barron and Jennifer Q. Burley (New York: CBS College Publishing, 1984), p. 195.
- <sup>3</sup>See Meltzer, p. 20.
- <sup>4</sup>Denise M. Wilms, "An evaluation of biography," in *Jump over the moon*, p. 220.
- <sup>5</sup>Joan I. Glazer and Gurney Williams III, *Introduction to children's literature* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1979), p. 399.
- <sup>6</sup>*Tiger a hockey story*, with James Lawton, (Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984).
- <sup>7</sup>"Maclean's best-seller list," *Maclean's*, November 12, 1984, p. 71.
- <sup>8</sup>Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1983.
- <sup>9</sup>Seven libraries were surveyed. The librarian in one intermediate school reported that he, paradoxically, stopped ordering autobiographical hockey books "because of their tendency to disappear."
- <sup>10</sup>*Children and books*, 6th ed., ed. Zena Sutherland et al. (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1981), p. 347.
- <sup>11</sup>See Bruce Kidd and John Macfarlane, *The death of hockey* (Toronto: New Press, 1972), p. 46.
- <sup>12</sup>Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1981.
- <sup>13</sup>Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1972.
- <sup>14</sup>*The death of hockey*, p. 127.
- <sup>15</sup>Martin O'Malley, review of *Tiger a hockey story*, *Maclean's*, *Maclean's* December 17, 1984, p. 64.
- <sup>16</sup>Punch Imlach with Scott Young, *Heaven and hell in the NHL* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1982).
- <sup>17</sup>Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited., 1972
- <sup>18</sup>*The game*, p. vii. It is interesting that Dryden's first hockey book, *Face-off at the summit* (Toronto: Little Brown and Company, 1973), written "with Mark Mulvey a year after the series it covers," has more in common with the episodic books of Sinden and Imlach.
- <sup>19</sup>*The hockey I love*, with V. Snegirev, translated by Anatole Konstantin (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1977).
- <sup>20</sup>*Children and books*, p. 408.
- <sup>21</sup>See *Heaven and hell*, Chapters 11, 14, 15.
- <sup>22</sup>Jean Fritz, "George Washington, My Father, and Walt Disney," *The Horn Book Magazine*, April, 1976, 191-98.
- <sup>23</sup>Don Cherry with Stan Fischler, *Grapes* (Toronto: Avon Books of Canada, 1982).
- <sup>24</sup>Jo Carr, "What do we do about bad biographies," in *Jump over the moon*, p. 227.
- <sup>25</sup>F.N. Monjo, "Great men, melodies, experiments, plots, predictability, and surprises," *The Horn Book Magazine*, October, 1975, 433-41. See also Glazer and Williams, p. 390.
- <sup>26</sup>Compare *Heaven and hell*, pp. 11, 17 and Imlach and Young, *Hockey is a battle* (Halifax: Goodread Biographies, 1983, first published in 1969), pp. 13, 197.
- <sup>27</sup>"An evaluation of biography," p. 223.
- <sup>28</sup>Unsigned review of *The game*, *Thunder Bay Times-News*, February 14, 1984, p. 9.
- <sup>29</sup>*Grapes*, pp. 115, 184, 124, 22, 78, 46, 171.

**James Gellert** is a member of the English Department at Lakehead University where he teaches courses in Shakespeare and Children's Literature.