Editorial: The Lives of Girls and Boys

After several recent issues on specific topics related to Canadian children's literature — politics, reception history, L.M. Montgomery and popular culture, and the children's literature of Australia — this double issue of *CCL* may appear to be all over the map. Our article section begins with the first of three papers documenting Jean Stringam's important research on early Canadian periodical fiction about the derring-do of working-class boys and ends with Miroslawa Ziaja-Buchholtz's thoughtful work on the identity politics of Native boys in the short fiction of Drew Hayden Taylor and Jordan Wheeler. So we travel from the nineteenth century to the late twentieth, from the colonial context to the postcolonial, from the paradox of working-class boys pursuing — what ho?! — aristocratic adventures to the problem of Native boys having blue eyes and expectations thrust upon them. What connects these endpapers on our "map" is mainly boys: how we pictured them and continue to picture them growing up, gaining an identity, and connecting to their pasts. Though the imaginings of boys have many consistencies across contexts, the issues of class and race that each paper raises are fascinatingly different.

The depiction of boys is also Claire Le Brun's primary concern in her survey of a popular umbrella series of "first novels" aimed at seven- to nine-year-olds from Éditions de la Courte Échelle. By examining recurrent motifs and themes in the series, Le Brun concludes that these boy characters generally lean more toward introspection and emotion than toward repression and action, even when maneuvering around clichéd plot motifs and unidimensional supporting female characters. Roderick McGillis reaches similar conclusions in his review of Gayle Friesen's young adult novel *Men of Stone*, the first in this issue's review section. Despite the book's overt promotion of non-violence and pacifism, McGillis maintains that its simultaneous associations of masculinity with aggression and of effeminacy with a pejorative sexuality become a problem for the development of the book's protagonist, the fifteen-year-old Ben.

In between these many lands on our "map," we travel back and forth between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries, stopping in our time travels at an island where Marianne Brandis, an award-winning writer of historical fiction, sits down to chat about her life and her work. Brandis's familiarity with the details of life in the nineteenth century is humbling: she'll tell you what a Canadian farmer would have eaten in 1857 in chill February and whether her skirt had pockets, to boot. Gary Draper's inter-

view with Brandis reveals to us a self-directed writer with a disciplined imagination whose love of words seems equaled only by her love of research. Brandis's comments about her ability to use historical fiction to convey more complex truths than autobiography are quite revealing when read alongside Jean-Denis Côté's interview with the young adult novelist Denis Côté, who discusses the autobiographical component in his science fiction novel *Aux portes de l'horreur*. Both of these interviews provide us with rare insights into an author's creative process, in particular the unfixed boundaries between history, autobiography, and fiction.

Next, we include exciting papers by scholars who reexamine existing feminist interpretations of Montgomery's heroines, in text and on screen. Eleanor Hersey argues that the 1985 television miniseries *Anne of Green Gables* is not the sappy romance that many have concluded it to be; by placing the miniseries within the context of 1980s feminist discourses, she discusses how the television Anne's engagement with books and reading exemplifies how strong and smart the screenwriters wanted her to appear. As well, Dawn Sardella-Ayres argues against the critics who lament the ending of Montgomery's *Emily* trilogy and assume that Emily's creativity will be squashed with her marriage to Teddy Kent. By identifying Alcott's Jo from *Little Women* as an intertextual source, Sardella-Ayres makes illuminating claims about the limits imposed upon each author, both of whom were unable to let their heroine remain a "literary spinster."

As it turns out, then, being "all over the map" isn't the state of aimlessness that you thought. In this issue of *CCL*, wandering among centuries and topics is a superior form of intellectual travel offering readers not a series of clearly-connected islands but an assortment of oases and promontories for respite and insight.

Marie C. Davis and Benjamin Lefebvre