things European. The Vikings finally abandon Vinland, knowing they cannot win the land, and that they could never share it with the Skraelings. By adapting the saga to have Ben/Tor holding the axe, Katz enables the abandoning of it to be a gesture of acceptance, goodwill, and trust rather than rejection. It also allows the Skraelings/Ship Cove kids the opportunity to express the same. It enables the ground — the "home" — to be shared:

> Tor had gone away from here, but he, Ben, would stay. And this time, he would make Vinland work.

The search for a shared ground between Native and European was also central to Katz's *False Face* (1987) in which a mixed-race boy, Tom, and a white girl, Laney, tentatively enter a new, unstereotyped human territory while dealing with the havoc caused by Iroquois medicine masks of power which are irresponsibly possessed by Laney's mother. Upon the book's nomination for Trillium and Governor General's awards, Katz was charged with cultural appropriation by members of the Iroquois nation. Eight years later, by having Ben know he would "make Vinland work," Katz responds to those who accused her of treading where she has no business. The land is a shared home, and we must make it work. Katz's fiction is an impressive contribution to that task.

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THE ATLANTIC'S FUTURE

Out of Darkness. Ishmael Baksh. Jesperson, 1995. 144 pp. $12.95 paper. ISBN 0-921692-71-4.

Out of Darkness is a dystopian novel for young adults. The chaos and despair from which the characters eventually escape in this future society stem from the present social crisis in Newfoundland. Current world and Atlantic problems such as lack of employment, lack of morals, and economic stagnation have culminated in a society where young people face such realities as fierce competition for scholarships in a world where education is the only hope; social and racial intimidation by gangs; alcoholism; violence in the home; ecological disaster; date rape; poverty; and paranoia. All our fears have come true.

This is not, however, a cyberpunk or violent novel. It is a political and social commentary. The future is non-democratic. Governed by The Party, Newfoundlanders have no freedom of thought or of movement beyond designated living areas for workers, play areas such as Rec-zones, and the dreaded Out-zones where "the unemployed were collected along with the descendants of the Second Resettlement and the thousands who had returned jobless from other provinces" (9). The threat of the violent anarchy in the Out-zones is as close as we get to Gibson's *Bladerunner*. The hero lives in worker's housing in St. John's.

This, then, is a future totalitarian state with "Enforcers" in the schools, mass education by holograms and computers in the classroom, videophones in the homes, and Public Affairs propaganda on television. The police force are the Enforcers: "a zealous lot because the Agency got a cut of all the fines the courts collected and a fee every time someone was imprisoned" (115-116). Videophones are easily tapped by the Enforcers, and the Public Affairs program is a must to watch because "the laws and the regulations were always changing, always growing, and, to stay out of trouble, people had to know what the latest rules were" (43).

If these conditions resemble those of our current lives, that is because the novel predicts dangerous outcomes for present situations. Ironically, this causes a major flaw in the novel: the distinction between our present and that of the novel is not clear. The reader questions the credibility of the fictional world of the future circa 2050 when the schools, homes, and cities are so similar to those of 1995. The students still use lockers, see police in the school corridors, work part-time at the corner store, live in over-stressed two-working parent families, face bullying, and experience social and racial discrimination. There are malls to hang out in. The classrooms are overcrowded, the teachers are fearful and overworked, and the curriculum is "all science and mathematics and computers and technology" (11). Novels in the school are old, but there is still a library. Furthermore, "the university had shut down its graduate programs because so many PhDs roamed the streets with nothing to do" (17). As heart-wrenching as it is, it is all too familiar.

Our credulity is further stretched by the improbability of the situation: on the one hand, The Party requires considerable force to control people and to compel them to live miserable, inhuman lives, yet, on the other hand, when the central family of the story escapes to the uninhabited areas of Newfoundland, we are told that "the province can't do much with the tiny fleet of helicopters they've got, or the two or three boats they have patrolling the sea" (134). One also wonders what advantage it is to The Party to deceive and keep people in misery when the entire economic situation is so bad, yet "The Party lies to the people. It's not the way they say it is. The fish have come back. The forests have regenerated. The place is bursting with life" (135). The premise of the novel and its dystopian outlook would suggest that powerful, greedy Party members would return to plundering and raping such resources, yet they ignore them, leaving such areas to be (unknown to them) reinhabited by escapees.

There are, then, serious flaws in the novel, but the fundamental question asked by the author is one of major concern, especially for young adult readers. What can one person do when faced by a monolithic political system and a broken social structure? Ishmael Baksh tells young people that one thing we should not do is sit by and accept the demands of destructive and self-serving politicians, for, if we do, we slip deeper into despair and decay. The central character, Gerry, is compassionate and humane, he faces the bullies with courage and he helps those, like Ravindra, who, he believes, are weaker than himself. Gerry's father tries to criticize the system publicly and is ostracized, but is saved by the quiet

heroism of Tendulkar, the father of Ravindra, who is secretly organizing an underground escape system for those "who get into difficulties through no fault of their own" (134). The courage of such people makes them heroic and their moral values are to be admired.

Though the novel does not create a convincing fictional world of the future, it makes us face our concerns about current affairs. It would stimulate discussion of social and political issues.

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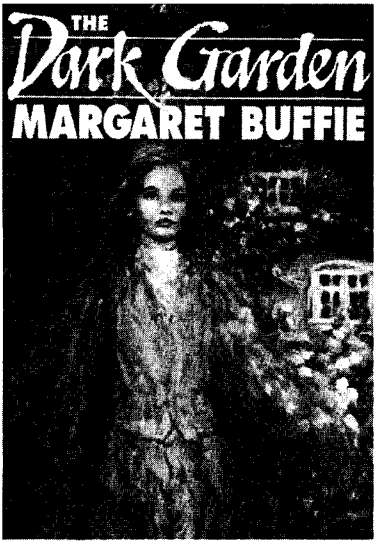
A GHOSTLY LOVE TRIANGLE

The Dark Garden. Margaret Buffie. Kids Can Press, 1995. 240 pp. $16.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55074-288-4.

When sixteen-year-old Thea arrives home from the hospital with amnesia, she is more than a little confused. Not only does she remember her house as it looked two generations earlier, she sees people who don't exist. She quickly becomes involved in the web of passion and violence which connects these apparitions.



In a spooky page-turner complete with an overgrown garden, a haunted churchyard, a kindly vicar and a next-door psychic, Margaret Buffie has once again written a book teenagers will love. Thea is an appealing protagonist, caught between resentment against her parents — who make her do all the housework while they focus on their careers — and a desire to take responsibility. The awfulness of her home-life makes Thea's obsession with the past even more understandable. Adolescents will sympathize with her moody defiance right up to the last page.

The story moves along briskly, with plenty of scary scenes and fascinating encounters. At times there seem to be more plot threads than can be comfortably handled in one novel. We follow Thea's recovery from amnesia, her adjustment to her difficult family, her connection