

boy who dabbles in voodoo; Nicky the Greek, whose father owns a restaurant; Buddha Wong, the chubby Chinese whose father owns a corner store) and never become real personalities in their own right. Even Willy, delightfully feisty and outspoken, (as in his reply to the offer of club membership: "Okay," Willy barked. "I accept. But if you think I'm going to go through all that nonsense about eating worms, you're dead wrong."), for some reason has never tried to walk before his contact with the boys.

The unbelievable plot and simplistic characters cause the book to founder as successful realistic adventure. It has, nonetheless, some very appealing bright spots. Readers will respond to the buoyant spontaneity of the boys. They don't think of the stodgy moral or legal implications of covering the "For Sale" sign with their lemonade sign: it is a quick and effective solution. Similarly childlike, they do not consider the ramifications of hoisting Willy into the clubhouse with makeshift equipment: he wants to do it and they are using the only materials they have. Certainly the most entertaining moment comes when the odd lotters smear chicken innards on Boyle's sign and leave a claw stuck in the O of his name. This is beautifully revolting.

Janes, a mining engineer and geologist, is obviously conversant with the language of construction and building materials, and without doubt he remembers what it is to look at the world as a child does. Although he has textbooks, travel stories, novels, and other trade books already to his credit, *The Odd Lot Boys and the Tree-Fort War* must be considered an apprentice work in juvenile fiction.

The six textured black and white illustrations by Affie Mohammed are too few to have any real impact on the book presentation, with the disturbing exception of the two rather sympathetic portrayals of the unscrupulous Boyle.

Paula L. Hart is an extra sessional lecturer in children's literature for the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University.

For the Reference Shelf

PHILOMENA HAUCK

Canadian Books for Young People/ Livres canadiens pour la jeunesse, ed. Irma McDonough. University of Toronto Press, 1978. 148 pp. \$7.50 paper.

Children's Literature: A Guide to Criticism, Muriel A. Whitaker, 1976. Athabasca Publishing Co., 1976. 64 pp. \$2.50 paper.

Profiles, ed. Irma McDonough. Canadian Library Association, 1975. 159 pp. \$6.00 paper.

Two of the books under review, *Profiles* and *Canadian Books for Young People/ Livres canadiens pour la jeunesse*, are new editions of previous publications. Both books are edited as before by Irma McDonough, editor of the periodical *In Review*, published quarterly by the Ontario Provincial Library Service.

Since its inception in 1967, each issue of *In Review* has included with its reviews of Canadian children's books one biographical sketch of an author or illustrator whose work has been reviewed in the magazine. Twenty of these sketches were collected and published in the 1971 edition of *Profiles*. The new edition adds 24 new sketches which have appeared in the magazine since that date and when necessary the previous sketches have been revised and updated.

Arranged alphabetically by author, each profile (except one) consists of a small photograph of the subject, biographical and career information, (approximately 3 pages) and a list of the subject's books. Where the author writes in the French language, the profile appears in French and English. New to this edition are black and white sketches by the illustrators featured and at the end of each biography a list of the subject's books in print. All the information is obtained from interviews with the subjects themselves and, as the editor states in the Preface, "the entries are descriptive and biographical rather than critical though a measure of adulation is bound to creep in". The interviewers are librarians and all entries are signed.

Since *Profiles* confines itself to authors and illustrators who have been featured in an 11 year span of *In Review*, earlier authors will naturally have been omitted. Inevitably also, some mediocre authors are included. For some reason, a few notable contemporary authors, e.g., Farley Mowat, James Houston and William Kurelek, whose works are justly popular with young people, have never been "profiled". Among the people included are Ann Blades, Lyn Cook, Christie Harris, Dennis Lee, George Clutesi, Jean Little, Markoosie and Yves Theriault.

Readers seeking critical evaluations of the subjects' books will not use *Profiles*; they will turn instead to Egoff's *Republic of Childhood* or to the more recent *Canadian Book Review Annual*, which includes Canadian literature in its coverage, or to a reviewing journal. Students, teachers and librarians will welcome *Profiles* for what it is: the only available (though not necessarily complete) source of collected information about Canadian authors for young people. ¹

Muriel Whitaker, the author of *Children's Literature: A Guide to Criticism* teaches Arthurian and Children's Literature at the University of Alberta. Readers of *Canadian Children's Literature* will know her for her scholarly articles on Canadian animal stories and on the heroines in L. M. Montgomery's fiction, as well as for her earlier review of Shiela Egoff's *The Republic of Childhood* in *CCL*.

It must be made clear at the outset, however, that Whitaker's book is not intended to deal with children's literature in Canada to any great extent. To quote from the introduction: "The focus has been on British and American works with some attention paid to other literatures in English (e.g. Canadian and Australian)."

The book consists of several booklists covering children's literature from many points of view, e.g. historical, archetypal, and thematic, with explanatory and critical comments which capture the essence of each aspect being dealt with. In the author's words, "the booklists are intended to be selective. Quality has been a primary consideration but it is not the only determiner since the nature of the subject matter is also relevant".

The book is divided into six chapters covering (a) bibliographies and general reference sources (b) the history of children's literature (c) general criticism (d) myth and folklore (e) individual authors and (f) periodicals devoted to children's literature. Each chapter is further subdivided, e.g. the fifth chapter on individual authors covers 24 authors in turn, from Aesop to T. H. White. Chapters and subdivisions are usually preceded by introductory comments (averaging about 300 words) which reflect the author's thorough knowledge of her subject.

A check of the booklists indicates that with few exceptions all landmark books in each area are included. A few anomalies, however, appeared. In a list of biographical sources, for example, the entry for *Something About the Author* suggests that this is a single book rather than an annual series. The same section includes only *The Junior Book of Authors 2nd ed., rev.*, although there are now four books in that series.

At the end of the chapter, in a Special Interests section, Violet Sell's *Subject Index to Poetry for Children and Young People* (c 1957) might be better replaced by Brewton's *Index to Children's Poetry* and supplements which are more current and comprehensive.

The last chapter in the book is the one entitled "Myth and Folklore", covering as it does the mythological archetypes and the legends, folklore, and fairy tales of Europe, the East and North America. Books by the Canadian authors Marius Barbeau, Sheila Egoff, Diamond Jenness, John McLean and David Damas are included in the lists. The other literary genres are all lumped together in the chapter on "General Criticism".

In the chapter on individual authors, Whitaker lists biographical and critical books about Aesop, Louisa May Alcott, Hans Christian Andersen, Sir James Barrie, John Bunyan, Lewis Carroll, Daniel Defoe, Walter de la Mare, Maria Edgeworth, Kenneth Grahame, the Brothers Grimm, Homer, Rudyard Kipling, C. S. Lewis, A. A. Milne, L. M. Montgomery, Beatrix Potter, Ernest Thompson Seton, Mark Twain and T. H. White. As the list suggests, the book is oriented not to the general reader but to students in children's literature courses at universities. In such courses, it would be a useful textbook.

It is not surprising that a handbook of this kind has no index. It is frustrating, however, to find that the table of contents has no page designations.

When *Canadian Books for Children/ Livres canadiens pour enfants* first appeared in 1976, it was intended as a selection tool for children's services departments in public libraries. It listed 900 of "the most important, relevant and excellent books for children written about Canada and Canadians published in Canada and elsewhere and those written by Canadian writers on any subject or theme".

The title change in the new edition of this annotated catalogue is intended to be a more accurate reflection of the age levels (from pre-school to age 14) for which the books are intended. Coverage has been expanded to include over 1500 books. The selection policy remains unchanged.

The book is divided into two main sections - one dealing with books in English and the other with books in French. Each of these sections is divided by subject, e.g., Folklore, Literature, Sports and Recreation, History, etc. In many cases, further subdivisions are employed. "See also" references are provided when necessary. Books are organized alphabetically by author (in bold-face type). All books are in print.

A typical entry contains full bibliographical information and a brief - usually descriptive - annotation. The English language books are sometimes designated as suitable for young middle, older, or mature readers, these designations being explained in the Preface. French language books, on the other hand, have been assigned specific age levels, e.g., "8-12 ans."

Added features are lists of publishers' series (these are not individually annotated, though a descriptive note about the complete series is provided), magazines for children, professional reading and award winning books in 13 different categories. An author-title index concludes the book.

Since it is "inclusive rather than exclusive", and the annotations generally uncritical, the book will be used with caution as a selection aid. The lack of approximate grade or reading level designations for the English language books is another disadvantage. Blade's *A Boy of Taché* - for example, is side by side with Burnford's *The Incredible Journey* with no indication of intended audience in either case.

These are minor reservations when set against the tremendous amount of research which has gone into the bibliography, the only one of its kind in Canada.

Profiles and Canadian Books for Young People/ Livres canadiens pour la jeunesse belong in every school and public library. Students in children's literature courses will find *Children's Literature: A Guide to Criticism* a helpful textbook or reference source.

NOTES

¹A much more complete source of bibliographical, biographical, and critical information will be available in *Twentieth Century Children's Authors*, available in late 1978 from Macmillan of Canada at \$50.00. This important reference work includes Canadian authors among the children's writers from the rest of the English-speaking world.

Philomena Hauck is an Associate Professor and Director of Education Materials Centre at the University of Calgary. She is co-author of Canadian Materials for Schools and The Media Centre in the Secondary School.