

# Responses . . .

1) Agnes Grant's comments below relate to two articles and a letter in earlier issues, on the topic of the Canadian reader's response to European and Native folklore. The relevant material is: Perry Nodelman, "Little Red Riding Hood as a Canadian Fairy Tale," *CCL* #20, pp. 17-27; Agnes Grant, "A Canadian Fairy Tale: What is It?," *CCL* #22, pp. 27-35; Perry Nodelman, "Which Canadian Fairy Tale?," *CCL* #29, pp. 87-88.

## The Need For A Comparative Mythology.

I realize that we are engaged in a discussion here that goes much deeper than Little Red and Nanabush. I can only react from the point of view of an educator whose major concern is cross-cultural education, be the children Indian, Métis, Phillipino or whatever. This has frequently embroiled me in lengthy discussions with English professors (needless to say, unresolved).

Comparative mythology is a must for children's literature courses for teachers. Studies in Saskatchewan show that by the year 2000, 45% of the school population there will be Indian or Métis (Dr. Kenn Whyte, Gabriel Dumont Institute of Research and Native Studies, 1981). Indian and Métis make up 15% of Manitoba's population today and are the fastest growing group. Add to that the various immigrant groups, especially in Winnipeg, and can you still say that the vast majority of students will have European ancestors? And if not, how are we at the universitites preparing teachers to cope with these multicultural classrooms? Surely we have a responsibility in this field. We may only succeed in creating an awareness of the fact that not everyone was raised on Little Red, but that will be no small accomplishment.

I disagree strongly with Perry Nodelman when he says that we cannot be truly Canadian until we give up our ethnic identity and "together make a new culture." Make a new culture out of what? a vacuum? I am German and was raised on the original Grimm version of Little Red. I expect Little Red to be around for a long, long time, but I also expect to make room for Nanabush and his counterparts from other cultures. It is probably true that Little Red and Nanabush will not "delight us in the same way." They will change, as they have already changed, Little Red more than Nanabush — though last summer I heard a delightful story about Nanabush and Santa Claus. However, until Nanabush occupies a place equal to Little Red's, Nanabush lovers will be forced not only to militantly promote Nanabush, but as militantly to reject Little Red. It is our challenge to see that the Canadian identity that is evolving is truly representative of all Canadians.

I do not believe we Canadians are in a "difficult" situation as Canadians. I think we live in a challenging, exciting era with great untapped potential, and that universities are uniquely suited to act as catalysts in areas of multiculturalism. *Agnes Grant*