

are too young and because Ann is unable to face the idea of leaving Newfoundland for Quebec, especially since she is painfully aware of her illiteracy.

The story is fascinating, and the text was on the shortlist for the Governor General's Award in 2003. Major's free verse works best at moments of high excitement, such as the shipwreck and the rescue. It is not so effective when describing human emotions, but the awkwardness of the style at such points reflects the awkwardness felt by his characters. Major could as easily have put the story in prose, although he must have felt compelled to provide more descriptive detail at the expense of story and characterization, given that the poetry allows for brevity. Blackwood is a master at portraying the sea, and his blue and grey illustrations (done in watercolour and graphite) are absolutely right for conveying the fog and waves of the Newfoundland coast. Major and Blackwood, like Echlin and Wolfsgruber, have created work with literary and artistic merit.

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Three Big Books of Canada / Gordon Lester

The Big Book of Canada: Exploring the Provinces and Territories. Christopher Moore. Illus. Bill Slavin. Intro. Janet Lunn. Tundra, 2002. 255 pp. \$39.99 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-457-6.

The Kids Book of Black Canadian History. Rosemary Sadlier. Illus. Wang Qijun. Kids Can, 2003. 56 pp. \$19.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55074-892-0.

The Kids Book of Great Canadians. Elizabeth MacLeod. Illus. John Mantha. Kids Can, 2004. 64 pp. \$19.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55337-366-9.

I have heard two explanations for the origin of the name Canada. According to the Department of Canadian Heritage, the name Canada is derived from *kanata*, a Huron-Iroquois word for village or settlement. On Jacques Cartier's second voyage in 1535, two Aboriginal youths directed Cartier to their village of Stadacona, now the site of Quebec City. Cartier used the word to refer not only to the village but to all the territory subject to Donnacona, chief of Stadacona. This has become the official version of the origin of Canada's name, popularized by a government-sponsored television commercial and repeated in Elizabeth MacLeod's recent book, *The Kids Book of Great Canadians*.

Another story explaining the name, taught to one of my former professors at the University of Western Ontario when he was a student at Upper Canada College, claims that Canada comes from a Spanish short form of "there's nothing there," meaning "there's no gold there." Evidence supporting this explanation consists of old maps of the Americas with other places labeled "Canada" south of the St. Lawrence. Although this version smacks of Eurocentrism, I think it appeals to a Canadian sense of irony, especially combined with Voltaire's famous description of Canada as "a few acres of snow." It is appropriate that the name Canada resists a

single definition, since the country itself resists any attempts to pigeonhole or to categorize it or its citizens as singular entities. The three recent children's reference books about Canada under review here reflect three unique approaches to the study of Canada.

In her introduction to Christopher Moore's *The Big Book of Canada: Exploring the Provinces and Territories*, Janet Lunn writes:

If you travel across Canada for many years, visiting all the provinces and territories, you begin to see the country the way you do a city: as a collection of neighbourhoods with personalities that have developed from the individual characteristics of the land and the people who have settled there. (8)

Moore's book, which bears the *Canadian Geographic* seal of approval, may be considered a type of travel book that begins in the east in Newfoundland and Labrador, moves west to British Columbia and north to the Yukon, and then concludes in Nunavut. Each chapter is devoted to a separate province or territory and is organized the same way, beginning with an illustrated map of the province or territory; information about its geographical landscapes; a chronology of historical moments; ethnographic information; significant locations "on the map"; types of work; famous people; laws, government, and treaties, statistics and symbols (for example, provincial or territorial shields and flowers); and a final page for additional cultural information. This organization ensures that an equal amount of space is provided for the thirteen provinces and territories. I was also impressed with the amount of information included in each chapter on Aboriginal and Métis individuals, histories, and cultures.

The book, beautifully illustrated by Bill Slavin, also includes many colour and black-and-white photographs. Each chapter is colour-coded, and the different sections are signalled with icons for quick and easy navigation. At the end of the book, Moore provides a reading list that directs young adult readers to novels set in each province or territory.

Rosemary Sadlier's *The Kids Book of Black Canadian History*, illustrated by Wang Qijun, is an informative overview that addresses the under-representation of Black Canadians in history. Often international in scope, the book begins with a chapter on African civilizations before European colonization, followed by a chapter on the Atlantic Slave Trade before chapters on slavery in New France and British Canada. Sadlier's book very aptly shows historical connections between Black communities in a range of areas, such as the Underground Railroad and the Jamaican Maroons who were transported to Nova Scotia. There are also chapters on Black settlement in regions across Canada.

Within the narrative of each chapter are interesting historical and cultural facts and profiles of important people, such as Mary Ann Shadd, who began a school for escaped slaves and a newspaper in Windsor, Ontario in the mid-nineteenth century, and Stanley G. Grizzle, who campaigned for equal rights in the 1950s and became the first Black judge in Ontario's Citizenship Court. Sadlier manages to balance national and international histories with the stories of individuals, to give human faces to the actors in this history.

MacLeod's *The Kids Book of Great Canadians* presents Canadian history via the achievements of its citizens. Many of the Canadians mentioned in Moore's and

Sadlier's books also appear here. MacLeod organizes the short biographies under nine groupings: Heroes, Exploration, Science and Technology, Business, Arts, Government, Sports, Nobel Prize Winners, and "More Great Canadians." Each biography focuses on the successes the Canadians had in their respective field, with special attention given to Canadian innovations. For example, Alphonse Desjardins is included for opening the first *Caisse populaire* (or credit union) in North America, Pauline Johnson for being the first Native poet published in Canada, and Banting and Best for discovering the use of insulin as a treatment for diabetes.

The book is a celebration of the lives of famous and important Canadians. The lesser moments in Canada's history have been set aside for discussion elsewhere; the hanging of Louis Riel, for example, is an "event [that] still causes arguments among Canadians" (44). Canada is presented as a place of freedom from slavery, rather than a place that also practiced slavery. Some Canadians, like Tom Longboat, "faced criticism and racial insults" from anonymous sources (50). As her title suggests, MacLeod is interested in the greatest of the people instead of the failures of their nation.

If the success of a book is gauged by the number of people who see it, I expect these books to be quite successful. My mother, a grade-four teacher in Brampton, Ontario, had already ordered the Kids Can books for her classroom before I was asked to review them. A copy of Christopher Moore's book will also be in her classroom by September.

Work Cited

"Origin of the Name — Canada." *Canadian Heritage*. 6 Mar. 2004 <http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/sc-cs/05_e.cfm>.

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Waiting and Running in Canadian Books for Boys / Roderick McGillis

Theories of Relativity. Barbara Haworth-Attard. HarperTrophy, 2003. 200 pp. \$15.99 paper. ISBN 0-00-639299-7.

Torn Away. James Heneghan. 1994. Orca, 2003. 266 pp. \$8.95 paper. ISBN 1-55143-263-3.

Take the Stairs. Karen Krossing. Second Story, 2003. 184 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 1-896764-76-2.

Tom Finder. Martine Leavitt. Red Deer, 2003. 141 pp. \$12.95 paper. ISBN 0-88995-262-0.