

Biography for children: The case of Dr. Frederick Banting

Mary Vipond

When I was ten or so, my school reader contained a short piece on Frederick Banting, the Canadian doctor who discovered the use of insulin to treat diabetes. What most impressed me, I recall, was an anecdote about how Banting went to bed one night in November, 1920, mulling over questions about the pancreas and diabetes, then awoke suddenly at 2:00 a.m. and jotted down in the little notebook he always kept by his bed: "Ligate pancreatic ducts of dogs. Wait six to eight weeks for degeneration. Remove the residue and extract." That midnight inspiration was to prove the beginning of the successful search for insulin and of Banting's national and international renown. For some weeks thereafter I never went to bed without a notepad and pencil beside me, until eventually I reluctantly had to admit to myself that the pages would likely remain forever blank, for I *never* woke up before 8:00 in the morning.

My purpose in recounting such a personal anecdote is to corroborate the remark with which Gillian Avery concludes her study of heroes and heroines in children's fiction: "It should come as an Awful Warning to all of us who write books for children; if we are remembered at all, it may well be for some point we never intended to make."¹ For although I have been unable to retrieve the reader in question, I have recently read a number of children's biographies of Frederick Banting, and can assert without hesitation that the message they convey is quite the opposite of the one I apparently received. The discovery of insulin, the authors of these biographies make abundantly clear, was not the result of a brilliant middle-of-the-night "hunch," but rather it was the product of Banting's hard work, determination, persistence, and perseverance — in other words of the traditional work ethic of Canadian pioneers. In itself, this is not terribly surprising, for most books written for children and young adults laud these virtues as those most appropriate for success in the adult world, and both the contemporary press and Banting's adult biographers have preached the same message.² Nevertheless, it is instructive to examine some of these children's biographies in detail, for they provide interesting comparisons and contrasts which reveal more than they perhaps intended about adult values, adult messages for children, and how these are conveyed.

Biography is one of the most difficult of literary genres. Like the historian, the biographer must allow for the fact that he or she begins with foreknowledge

of the outcome of the story, which “inevitably prefigures the scope and direction of his investigation.”³ Like the historian as well, the biographer must select from a vast mass of data in order to “best communicate the sense of his subject to his readers.”⁴ Inevitably the biographer’s own cultural presuppositions influence his or her choices.⁵ What makes biography particularly difficult is the need to examine another individual’s personality with objectivity yet at the same time sensitivity to the complexity and nuance of human character.

In many ways the children’s biographer has an even more challenging task. For one thing, the life of the subject is further beyond the experience of the reader than is the case with adult biographies.⁶ As well, the children’s biographer must present the facts not only entertainingly but simply. Biographies written for children cannot contain only facts and interpretation; they also must be good stories in order to capture and retain the child’s attention and interest.⁷ Most of the conventions of children’s biography follow from this premise. Biographies for children tend to be more fictionalized than adult biographies, with a considerable amount of imaginary dialogue and often completely fabricated events. Many of the critics now condemn this practice, but it nevertheless persists.⁸ Because it is assumed that children will identify most with the subject’s childhood, a disproportionate amount of space is often devoted to the hero’s early life; again, because this is often the period about which least is known, the author’s creative imagination tends to replace factual data. Detailed discussion of such topics as the subject’s attitudes toward children also presumably helps the child reader to relate to and understand his character. But the children’s biographer must search constantly for the proper balance between interest and authenticity. There is quite a bit to be said for Sheila Egoff’s argument that fabrication for the sake of arousing interest is an insult to the intelligence of child readers, and patronizing to the subject-matter. If the *true* story is not in itself interesting enough, then why tell it at all?⁹

Although almost all biographies to some extent serve the purpose of holding up as models for emulation individuals who are remarkable in some way, children’s biographies tend to do so much more explicitly. As Anderson and Groff point out in *A new look at children’s literature*, it is commonly accepted by adults involved in writing and recommending books to children that “if a child reads stories of ‘good’ men’s lives, he will model his life after their deeds, and thereby grow up to be a respectable, generous, and responsible member of the adult society.”¹⁰ Although Anderson and Groff go on to point out that no evidence exists that this sort of “bibliotherapy” succeeds, and others suggest that it may actually be harmful,¹¹ this does not seem to have much affected the genre, and indeed many authorities still defend the role-model aspect of children’s biographies as both necessary and worthwhile.¹² Whether it works or not, however, this approach to biography does serve one useful

function — it reveals how the biographers themselves define such terms as goodness and greatness, and thus provides an insight into the society of which the authors are a part. Because most societies see in their young people “the purest manifestation and repository of ultimate cultural and societal values,”¹³ an examination of what they wish their children to read in fact constitutes a partial intellectual history of that society.

It is from this perspective that I wish to examine here four book-length biographies of Frederick Banting written for children and published between 1946 and 1976: Margaret Mason Shaw’s *He conquered death* (1946), Israel Levine’s *The discoverer of insulin* (1959), Marie-Reine Koehler’s *Banting* (1973) and Margaret Mason Shaw’s *Frederick Banting* (1976).¹⁴ There are also of course many shorter pieces about Banting in readers and other collections, as well as radio scripts, a film, even a comic strip, but I will concentrate here on the full-length treatments which offer more complexity and subtlety as well as more permanent accessibility.¹⁵ The four books appeared over the course of a thirty-year period, a period marked by considerable social and economic change in Canada, and also by the increasing sophistication of both children and children’s books. The first, (which will be termed Shaw I) was published in the same year as the two major adult biographies of Banting, Lloyd Stevenson’s *Sir Frederick Banting* and Seale Harris’ *Banting’s miracle*. Certain anecdotes and incidents which were initially recounted by either Stevenson or Harris and which appear in Levine, Koehler and Shaw II are thus missing from Shaw I. By the 1976 publication of Shaw II the trend to more attractive and interesting presentations is very evident, and that book (in Fitzhenry and Whiteside’s extensive series *The Canadians*) is profusely and attractively illustrated, with marginal annotations and questions adding visual and intellectual variety. The three English-language books were written for children twelve and older, while Koehler’s *Banting* (in Holt, Rinehart and Winston’s *Joie de lire* series) is aimed at seven to nine year olds, and defines difficult words in footnotes. Thus there are considerable differences among the books, even without mentioning differences in content. The similarities of theme among the books, however, is their most striking — and most revealing — feature, and I will turn to that first.

Frederick Grant Banting was born into a fairly ordinary Ontario farm family near Alliston, Ontario, in 1891. All four books devote at least a chapter or two to his childhood, using the opportunity to illustrate what an average fellow he was — helping with chores, exploring in the woods, competing in sports, regularly attending church, playing with his dog. In all four books emphasis is placed on the solid, affectionate homelife, the deep religious convictions of the parents, and on Fred’s persistence and determination (but not brilliance) in school. All in all, he is shown as an all-round boy, although perhaps a little on the dull side. Shaw II recounts an anecdote about Fred’s embarrassment

at having to wear his sister's cast-off buttoned boots, a perfect tale for illustrating Fred's "normal" boyish reactions — and indeed this is the vignette with which Stevenson began his adult biography. The most commonly recounted anecdotes, however, used in the three later books, are two which serve a "premonitory" purpose. In one of these — the one with which Koehler begins her book — the young Fred witnesses two workmen fall from a scaffold. Little Frédérique rushes to get the village doctor, and then watches admiringly as the wounded man is cared for. "Quelle magnifique profession!", he thinks to himself. One day "lui aussi, il sera médecin. . ."¹⁶ Israel Levine attributes Banting's decision to become a doctor to another incident, one with even more direct relevance to Banting's future. Apparently, a close friend and playmate named Janie died of diabetes at the age of fourteen. Levine recounts Janie's death and funeral in considerable imaginative detail, and then has the young Fred conclude to himself that God does not intend us simply to endure such tragedy but to work toward progress and improvement.¹⁷ As far as I have been able to determine, the story of Janie was probably apocryphal, but it is of course precisely the kind of tale which if it hadn't existed, begged to be invented.

At the age of nineteen, Fred Banting left home to study theology at the University of Toronto. Within a year, however, he broke the news to his parents that he wished to switch into medicine. Koehler and Levine pay considerable attention to the "torment" Banting went through in making this decision, which he knew would disappoint his parents a great deal, and Levine uses it as an opportunity to suggest that Banting was making a choice of the future over the past.¹⁸ Shaw made little of this event, however, in either of her books. All four books recount Banting's university experience only briefly, emphasizing mainly that he worked hard but also played sports, indulged in practical jokes, was kind to his landlady — in other words was an average student of his day. Only Shaw I sounds a slightly different note in her comment that Fred never joined the others on social occasions: "In fact, he used to lecture some of the boys who were always going to parties and not attending to their work, but he did it in such a way that the boys didn't mind."¹⁹

Before Banting's course was finished, World War I began, so the terms were speeded up so the young medical graduates could get to the front. All the books cover Banting's war service quite extensively, with emphasis on his patriotism and courage and his winning of the Military Cross. In Shaw's first book, which is written as the narrative of a father telling Banting's story to his son and his son's chums, one of the boys asks, "Did he [Banting] do anything spectacular [in the War]?" The father's response is typical of the portrayal of Banting in all these books:

Banting wasn't the spectacular type. His courage was not the impulsive or reckless kind.

He gave himself just as surely as the dashing hero does, but it was through a deep devotion to duty and a complete forgetfulness of self.²⁰

After the war Banting returned to Toronto to an internship at the Hospital for Sick Children. This period is used by all the authors to attest to Banting's deep love of children. "Although his fellow staff members sometimes found him abrupt and unresponsive," Shaw writes, "the young patients loved him." "He always had time to tell them a story or a joke or to play a quick game, his hands were gentle when he examined them."²¹ In July, 1920, Banting set up a practice in London, Ontario. It was there, while preparing for a physiology lecture he was giving to medical students at the University of Western Ontario, that he had the idea for the experiment which led eventually to the production and use of insulin.

The children's biographies do a credible job of explaining simply the medical background to Banting's work. Shaw's two books go into the most detail, but all the works discuss with clarity the function of the pancreas, the course of diabetes, and the experiments which Banting and his associate Charles Best undertook during the summer of 1921 in the attic laboratory in Toronto. All mention that the eventual development of insulin was the product of the work of a whole team of researchers, but like the adult biographies, they clearly imply that Banting was the "captain of the team."²² Two side issues must be mentioned here. The experiments performed by Banting and Best necessitated the use — and sacrifice — of dogs. This made them the target of anti-vivisectionists at the time, and animal experimentation remains an issue for many today — and one to which children are probably particularly sensitive. Only Shaw was attuned to that. Koehler doesn't mention the problem at all; Levine treats it very matter-of-factly, actually describing how the two young researchers went out into the streets of Toronto to purchase more dogs when their supply ran out. Shaw's treatment of the subject is more sensitive, but very romanticized. In both her books she emphasizes how the dogs "were more than simply experimental animals — they were friends." "Fred," she writes, "found that many of his dogs seemed to almost understand and co-operate."²³ If the dogs had been able to talk, the narrator-father in Shaw I tells his listeners, "I'm sure they would have said that they were willing to help in anything that was important to their human friends."²⁴ On the other hand, in the 1976 Shaw book a marginal question is inserted which brings more than a touch of reality, especially by the (incorrect) choice of relative pronoun: "What becomes of animals who have been used for medical research?"²⁵

A second sensitive issue concerns Banting's relationships with some of his colleagues, and especially with Professor J.J.R. Macleod, the director of the laboratory in which the experiments were done. Over the years the tales of the quarrel between the two men, which centred on the attribution of credit

for the discovery, have been the saddest aspect of the whole insulin story. Suffice it to say here that Banting was forever embittered by what he considered to be Macleod's attempt to take credit, and by the Nobel Prize Committee's decision to award the 1923 Prize for Medicine jointly to Macleod and himself. Shaw's first book, written when the issue was still quite contentious in some circles, virtually ignores the matter. Koehler's covers it in a single sentence, describing Banting as "très irrité et très peiné" that Macleod rather than Best had received the Nobel Prize.²⁶ Levine treats it rather straightforwardly, remarking on Banting's bitter and permanent resentment against Macleod, but hastening to point out that Banting was not vain or selfish — that he was happy to share credit with Best, who he felt really did deserve it.²⁷ Shaw's second book devotes three or four paragraphs to the issue, and explains some of the reasons why Macleod was honoured, before apparently concluding that all in all Macleod did get more credit than he deserved — in other words that Banting was at least somewhat justified in his resentment.²⁸

When the discovery of insulin was announced to the public, Banting became almost overnight a Canadian hero. Awards and honours were heaped upon him, among them the Nobel Prize already mentioned and one of Canada's last knighthoods (in 1934). The children's biographers treat the subject of Banting's success and acclaim from one point of view only: his modesty. Levine, who is most sophisticated on this as on most subjects, discusses the way the press turned Banting into a popular hero, and the difficulties the shy young man had in coping with celebrity status. Even he, however, uses the well-known quotation from a contemporary newspaperman: "[Banting] gives the impression he just happened to be around when the result was announced."²⁹ Shaw waxes eloquent about Banting's modesty and generosity, although moreso in her first book than in her second. The authors also use the opportunity offered here to praise Banting's patriotism in refusing countless offers to move to the United States. His lack of pecuniary motive, his selfless devotion to the service of others — these are the themes emphasized in the children's, as in the adult, biographies.

Perhaps the biggest disadvantage of fame is the loss of privacy. Banting suffered greatly from that, and at no time more than in 1932, when the Toronto press splashed across the front pages all the lurid details of his divorce from his first wife. The divorce is treated gingerly by all three authors. Koehler's book for younger children does not mention Banting's family life at all — an interesting omission which may be due to reluctance to discuss the divorce. Levine covers the divorce only briefly, remarking on the sensationalism of the press.³⁰ Shaw's first book mentions the subject only in the final chapter, which is mainly an account of Banting's relationship with his son Bill. The reasons for the unhappiness of Banting's marriage to Marian Robertson are personal, her narrator tells us, and none of our business. In her second book Shaw adds that the Bantings were "temperamentally unsuited," Marian being fond of social

life while her husband avoided it at all costs.³¹ Neither Shaw nor Levine moralize about the break-up of the family (although there is certainly an implied criticism of Marian in Shaw); they both emphasize, however, how close Banting was to his son.

From the time of the discovery of insulin until Banting's death in a military plane crash during World War II, he worked in medical research and administration. The texts cover this era fairly briefly, although Shaw, who actually worked under Banting during this period, goes to some lengths to explain a bit about how modern medical research is conducted. Nothing is said by any of the authors about Banting's lack of training for medical research, which hampered and frustrated his post-insulin career. Banting also travelled a great deal during the 1930's, and indulged in his hobby of painting with his friends from the Group of Seven. All four books cover these activities with some enthusiasm, for they provide the opportunity to add variety, colour and human interest to the narrative.

Then comes Banting's tragic death in 1941 at the age of forty-nine. Shaw in both books is particularly maudlin about the death and the funeral, even hinting in her 1946 text at the possibility of sabotage in the crash.³² All four biographies conclude with what the authors consider the main theme of the Banting story. Actually two messages are communicated in these closing statements. Israel Levine concludes *The discoverer of insulin* with both of them: Banting's real memorials are the new life and hope he has given to millions and the inspiration he has given to other medical researchers.³³ Koehler emphasizes the gift of life as well, particularly to juvenile diabetics.³⁴ Shaw concludes her first book with the four young boys anxious to devote their lives to medicine or research, which prompts the father to quote one of Banting's favourite lines: "I am a firm believer in the theory that you can do or be anything that you wish if only you work hard enough and long enough."³⁵ Her second book, however, ends on a different note, a paraphrase of a statement made by Lord Moynihan at the 1930 opening of the Banting and Best Research Institute at the University of Toronto: "[Banting's] most lasting memorial . . . is in the hearts of thousands of grateful people who live and will live because of his great life-saving discovery."³⁶

In summary, what is the message of these three children's authors about Sir Frederick Banting? What assumptions do they reveal about appropriate role models for children? What do they disclose about the conventions of children's biography?

Because it is so slight, and written in a style suitable for younger children, Koehler's biography is the least revealing of the four studied here. Banting has never been a hero in French Canada in the same way he has been in English Canada, so the very existence of a French children's biography is noteworthy. (This book, however, was published by a Toronto house in a series which con-

sists mostly of translations of English books; in other words it is not really a product of Quebec publishing and editorial decisions, although it is available in Quebec.) Koehler's biography does cover the story adequately for the age level at which it is aimed, although as already mentioned the absence of discussion of Banting's family life is noticeable. More interestingly, this book lays much less stress than the English ones on Banting's hard work, persistence and determination. The main attributes Koehler gives Banting are curiosity, compassion, courage, prudence, and generosity. Like the English authors, however, Koehler does stress his "grand coeur" and his "service de ses frères." Thus this emphasis on the hero as self-sacrificing seems to be a very common Canadian theme.³⁷

Levine, the author of the most subtle and interesting study, is an American, who by his own admission had never heard of Banting until doing research for another book. By and large, however, Levine's book shares many characteristics with the Canadian ones, undoubtedly in part because he relied heavily on Stevenson, although the lengthy accounts of Banting's attitude toward the Soviet Union in the 1930s and of his friendship with a refugee German Jewish family illustrate Levine's special interests. The adjectives Levine most commonly uses to describe Banting are "curious," "persistent," "plucky," "dogged," "conscientious," "moody," "stubborn," "idealistic," "dedicated," "modest," "generous," "self-effacing" — in other words, a healthy mixture of the qualities necessary for success in scientific research — and presumably in life — with a couple of less admirable traits thrown in to keep the hero human.

Most interesting of all, perhaps, are Shaw's two books, for she was the closest to her subject, the most "typically" English Canadian, and we have the advantage of comparing her views at two different times. Not surprisingly, she did not substantially change her mind between 1946 and 1976 as to what made Banting a worthy role-model for Canadian children. The same old pioneer virtues appear in both books — hard work, persistence, perseverance, an inquiring mind, consideration, thoughtfulness, loyalty, devotion to duty, forgetfulness of self, modesty, and generosity — but she also points out that Banting was an impatient man, occasionally gloomy, and often gruff. Both of Shaw's books are distinguished by their success at marrying two themes — science and humanity. She explains with considerable skill details of medical research in many areas which would interest any boy or girl with a scientific bent. At the same time she injects notes which make Banting seem more human — his idiosyncratic short-sleeved lab coats, for example, or his tending to a little lamb after the lab technicians had gone home for the night. Both Shaw's books show this blend, although the detail is richer in the second, presumably because more information was available by then, because she was not working within the straitjacket of the narrative form, but also, I think, because she was more aware

by the 1970s, as were all children's authors, of the effectiveness of the telling detail in holding a child's interest.

All these biographies provide examples and illustrations of the conventions of biography for children, but they also illustrate how these conventions have changed in the last forty years. Again, the contrast between Shaw I and Shaw II best epitomizes these innovations. The first book was, to put it bluntly, much inferior to the second. The device of using a narrator to tell the story is awkward and too cute. The illustrations consist only of a few black and white plates. The tone is moralistic and heavy-handed. Banting is presented as a paragon with virtually no faults; there is no subtlety to the message that children should model their lives after his. The lesson is hammered home in the final pages, when the four boys all decide that they would like to be doctors or scientists too, and the father advises them that the main prerequisite is hard work. Shaw II, however, is somewhat less moralizing than Shaw I, and takes Egoff's advice to heart: the story itself is of enough intrinsic interest that artificial devices like those she used in the earlier book are not necessary. While there is a certain amount of imaginary thought and conversation in this book, most of the information is communicated in the third person. On the other hand, Shaw II does retain a disproportionate emphasis on Banting's childhood and some fictionalizing for that period. As already mentioned, this 1976 biography is profusely illustrated and attractively laid out, although the relevance of some of the photographs included is questionable.

Although in the past children's biographies often eulogized the pure hero, without warts, the modern tendency is to show some character flaws, still however for the didactic purpose of showing children that despite their imperfections they can one day succeed, that people do grow and develop, and that there is hope for them yet!³⁸ Some shifts in this respect can be seen in the books examined here. The later books are almost always more explicit on such touchy questions as the feud with Macleod, the irascible temperament, the divorce, and the use of experimental animals. Shaw I portrays a white knight; the other three books show a more fully-rounded human being.

Thus both continuity and change may be found in these four children's biographies of the same subject. Writing for children clearly has matured and developed since the Second World War, and better books are the result — more realistic ones, and better illustrated, which develop the child's understanding of character more fully. But other things have altered little. In the thirty years intervening between the first children's biography of Banting and the last, Canada has changed a great deal under the impact of urbanization and immigration. These transformations do not seem to have much affected the way in which he is portrayed in these books. To a large extent, of course, the facts of Banting's life have determined the traditional English Canadian slant of the biographies; nevertheless there are certain biases in the portrayal of Banting which make

his story more “alien” to modern children than it need be. The lessons in these books are about hard work, about individualism, about rural life and the nuclear family. In fact, however, the authors could have more fully developed quite different themes — about proper training, about teamwork, about the single-parent, urban society, which perhaps are more relevant to contemporary Canadian children, without being in the least false to the facts of Banting’s life.³⁹

Children’s biographers work under difficult conditions, pulled by motives which are essentially at cross-purposes. On the one hand they desire to make the subject interesting, but are bound at the same time to remain true to what is known about the character and the events of his or her life. The trend now, as illustrated by Shaw’s second book, seems to be toward keeping fictionalized thought and dialogue to a minimum, and letting the natural attraction of the topic and the richly detailed recounting of human interest anecdotes provide the necessary liveliness and story line. In the case of the Banting biographies, as in most children’s biographies, the authors have tended to do little original research but rely, instead, on previously published accounts. As one might suspect, this has resulted in some errors and some apocrypha, particularly because the two major adult biographies are more than thirty-five years old. The forthcoming publication of a new biography of Banting by Michael Bliss, based in part on some hitherto unexamined documents, will update the story considerably, and pave the way for a new generation of children’s biographies.

Another tension under which children’s biographers must work is the pull between authenticity and moralizing. The good biographer must strive always to recreate for the reader an accurate sense of time and place into which to position the subject. At the same time, however, the children’s biographer is attempting to convey moral lessons to the child reader. Although the authors of these Banting biographies seem very aware of the tension between interest and authenticity, they do not seem so conscious of this second axis of contradiction. In fact, many of the “lessons” in the Banting biographies are of doubtful applicability for children today. For example, much of Banting’s success was attributed to his wholesome and God-fearing upbringing; what do the multitude of modern children from broken and/or irreligious families conclude about their own chances for success? Much was made by the biographers of Banting’s happy childhood close to nature and animals. What does the urban child without even a pet conclude about the appropriateness of Banting as a model? Indeed, what do modern children think about the primary injunction of these books — that success will follow from hard work — when they see their parents ready, willing and able to work, but unable to find jobs?⁴⁰ Banting’s biographers have been too little conscious of the potential contradictions between historical accuracy and the setting up of role models. In this respect as well, it is time for another generation of Banting biographies more sensitive to the realities of the lives of the child readers of the 1980s.

For the most part, the authors of these biographies deliberately held Frederick Banting up as a model in order to teach certain moral lessons to their readers. Yet there are other messages in these books, particularly in what is omitted. These messages, sent unconsciously by the authors, were the products of their own cultural and ethical assumptions. I began this article with an anecdote which suggested that as a child I did not in fact understand the injunction intended by my school reader's story on Banting. Consciously, perhaps not, but I have no doubt that unconsciously I did indeed conclude from that piece — and from many other similar ones — that perseverance and hard work would lead me to successful adulthood. Child readers are suggestible. Those who write for them must strive at all times to be aware of what they are imparting, both in what they say and in what they do not say, and must seek to make their messages both realistic and relevant.

NOTES

- 1 Gillian Avery, *Childhood's pattern: a study of the heroes and heroines of children's fiction 1770-1950* (London, 1975), p. 243.
- 2 See M. Vipond, "A Canadian hero of the 1920s: Dr. F.G. Banting," *Canadian historical review*, LXIII (December, 1982), pp. 461-86, and Kevin F. Quinn, "Banting and His biographers: Maker of miracles, makers of myth," *Queen's quarterly*, 89 (Summer, 1982), pp. 243-59.
- 3 Carol Shloss, "The lives of Hart Crane: revision of biography," *Biography*, 3 (Spring, 1980), p. 134.
- 4 Peter Nagourney, "The basic assumptions of literary biography," *Biography*, 1 (Spring, 1978), p. 93.
- 5 Shloss, p. 135.
- 6 J.C. Stott, "The writing of biography," *Canadian children's literature*, 11 (1978), p. 68.
- 7 C.S. Huck and D.Y. Kuhn, *Children's literature in the elementary school* (second ed., New York, 1968), p. 274.
- 8 For example, Sheila Egoff, *The republic of childhood: a critical guide to Canadian children's literature in english* (second edition, Toronto, 1975), pp. 205-10. 9W. Anderson and P. Groff, *A new look at children's literature* (Belmont, Calif., 1972), p. 194; Egoff, pp. 205-10.
- 10 Anderson and Groff, p. 193.
- 11 M. Jurich, "What's left out of biography for children," *Children's literature*, 1 (1972), p. 149.
- 12 For example, K.L. Donelson and A.P. Nilsen, *Literature for today's young adults* (Glenview, Ill., 1980), p. 293.
- 13 S.N. Eisenstadt, "Archetypal patterns of youth," in Erik H. Erikson, ed., *The challenge of youth* (Garden City, New York, 1965), p. 32.
- 14 A fifth book-length biography, John Rowland's *The insulin man* (1965) is not treated here because it is so obviously written for the market in England and is not widely available in Canada.
- 15 Shorter studies widely accessible and worthy of note include Viola Whitney Pratt, *Canadian portraits: Osler, Banting, Penfield, famous doctors* (Toronto,

- 1956), and L. Bertin, "The catalyst" in *Great Canadians* (The Canadian centennial library, Toronto, 1965).
- ¹⁶ Marie-Reine Koehler, *Banting* (Toronto, 1973), p. 2. This story was originally in Stevenson.
- ¹⁷ Israel E. Levine, *The discoverer of insulin: Dr. Frederick G. Banting* (New York, 1959), p. 21. This story was originally in Harris.
- ¹⁸ Koehler, p. 8; Levine, p. 25.
- ¹⁹ Margaret Mason Shaw, *He conquered death: the story of Frederick Grant Banting* (Toronto, 1946), p. 3.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.
- ²¹ Margaret Mason Shaw, *Frederick Banting* (Don Mills, Ont., 1976), p. 14.
- ²² Loyd Stevenson, *Sir Frederick Banting* (Toronto, 1946), p. 102. On the accuracy of that appellation see the excellent reconstruction in Michael Bliss, *The discovery of insulin* (Toronto, 1982), Chapters 2-5.
- ²³ Shaw II, p. 19.
- ²⁴ Shaw I, p. 21.
- ²⁵ Shaw II, p. 18.
- ²⁶ Koehler, p. 22.
- ²⁷ Levine, pp. 118-19, 134-5.
- ²⁸ Shaw II, pp. 28-9.
- ²⁹ Levine, p. 127
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 155.
- ³¹ Shaw II, p. 44.
- ³² Shaw I, pp. 98-9.
- ³³ Levine, p. 184.
- ³⁴ Koehler, p. 32.
- ³⁵ Shaw I, p. 110.
- ³⁶ Shaw II, p. 61.
- ³⁷ See M. Vipond, pp. 481-2 (see footnote 2), and J.R. Sorfleet, "Survival in perspective," *Canadian children's literature*, 2 (1975), p. 5.
- ³⁸ Huck and Kuhn, p. 275; Sister M. Iona Taylor, "A study of biography as a literary form for children," (unpublished D. Ed. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1970), pp. 11, 33.
- ³⁹ One linguistic change worth noting concerns the serial story with which Banting amused his small son. Shaw I tells us it was about the adventures of a "little darky boy." In Shaw II he has become a "little black boy."
- ⁴⁰ See Jurich, pp. 149-50.

Mary Vipond is a member of the Department of History at Concordia University (Loyola Campus).