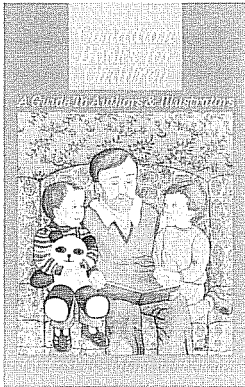


est aux vertus séductrices du livre: Pourquoi n'a-t-on pas orné la couverture du bouquin de ce paysage fleuri qu'on trouve à l'endos, plutôt que de nous infliger ce lugubre portrait qui aurait bien pu (que Lefebvre, ce promoteur de la "pédagogie muséale" me pardonne!) rester au musée?

Jean-Yves Boyer est spécialiste du livre documentaire. Il enseigne à l'Université du Québec à Hull.

CANON, AND SURVEY, AND SPECIALTY

Worlds within: Children's fantasy from the Middle Ages to today. Sheila A. Egoff. Washington: American Library Association, 1988. 340 pp., \$32.50 U.S., cloth. ISBN 0-8389-0494-7; **Canadian books for young people / Livres canadiens pour la jeunesse.** André Gagnon and Ann Gagnon. University of Toronto Press, 1988. 186 pp., \$14.95 paper. ISBN 0-8020-6662-3;



Canadian books for children: A guide to authors & illustrators. Jon C. Stott and Raymond E. Jones. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988. 246 pp., \$19.95 paper. ISBN 0-7747-3081-1.

When Sheila Egoff published her ground-breaking *Republic of childhood* in 1967, she noted the paucity of books published for young readers in this country--"since 1952, only some 30 or 40" each year. In 1988 CCL's annual bibliography listed over 360 publications in a single year. Given this amazing growth, critics and librarians today must be grateful for the appearance in 1988 of three useful aids to selection.

Sheila Egoff's *Worlds within* places Canadian examples in the specialized field of fantasy; Jon Stott and Raymond Jones offer a guide to authors and illustrators; and André Gagnon and Ann Gagnon update the bilingual, selective, annotated bibliography of children's books, compiled in earlier versions by Irma McDonough-Milnes.

Books noted by the Gagnons in this fourth edition of *Canadian books for young people / Livres canadiens pour la jeunesse* constitute a canon. These books have survived as "excellent and relevant". The Gagnons in their preface add the third criterion, "informative"-- a term hard to justify in the case of fantasy and poetry. Nevertheless this criterion leads the authors to select important titles on social sciences, applied sciences, geography, travel, biography, history, sports and recreation--kinds of reading often ignored in critical texts.

Organization of *Canadian books for young people / Livres canadiens pour la jeunesse* is by genre, beginning with board books and picture books. Every section, besides being a useful selection tool, gives an interesting overview of a particular type of book. On historical fiction, for instance, the notes let us see the range of past periods covered by recreators of history, from Bilson and Brandis to Yee. The French half of the bibliography differs in sectioning: some units are added. (e.g., *bandes dessinées*, and *religion*); some disappear (e.g., no "sports and recreation"--sports reappears under *les arts*); and fiction is not divided into "realistic", "historical", etc.

Jon Stott and Raymond Jones present their survey of English-language and in-translation francophone authors and illustrators, in alphabetical order. They begin with Sue Alderson, the *Bonnie McSmithers* lady, and work through to Meguida Zola's work on Terry Fox. This alphabetical order throws up thought-provoking sequences. Think about "Thurman... Toye... Traill..." for instance: what an evocation of range, from the easy-to-read elephant stories, through the haunting legendary *Loon's necklace*, to the historic Victorian survival story! From the cheerful cover picture by Ann Blades to the final list of books most appropriate for each level from kindergarten to Grade 8, this is a welcome, useful book. A shorter second part of the Stott/Jones book consists of 22 pages on the use of Canadian stories in the classroom. ("Stories" excludes poetry and drama.) Aids for analysis of character, setting, and structure are augmented by good general advice: "read aloud. . . expect response. . . explore. . . challenge."

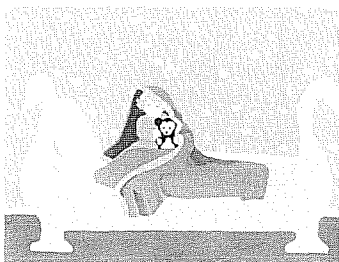
The challenge of fantasy, the "games of dark" that involve child readers in imaginative departures from the norm: here is the special focus of Sheila Egoff's new book. *Worlds within* moves from Medieval to Victorian varieties of fantasy, then specifies the great range of sub-genres today, such as science fiction and past-time fantasy. In Canadian examples, Dr. Egoff notes the movement from "enchanted realism" in pioneers like Catherine Clark, to the paranormal fantasies of psychic possession by modern practitioners such as Cora Taylor and Welwyn Katz. Such fantasies, a development beyond the work of British writers such as Alan Garner and William Mayne, emit a neurotic danger signal. Egoff obviously worries about the dubious use of secondary worlds predicated on acceptance of witchcraft as a reality. (Incidentally, Stott and Jones assess Katz's work more affirmatively: they write of her work as strong, original, offering honest endings with an unhappy edge.) Egoff, in focusing on this new development, by-passes some of the people analyzed in her earlier work--Christie Harris, Towrie Cutt, and Lynn Cook, for instance, and pays no attention to new fantasists such as Monica Hughes, Tim Wynne-Jones and Robert Munsch. She retains her respect for Janet Lunn and Ruth Nicholls, and quotes her own praise of the traditional, optimistic, romantic fantasy that ends with a walk back into the sane world of everyday. Cultural historians, post-modern psychologists, and sociologists theorize about fantasy in ways

that Egoff does not address. She does however chronicle and compare a vast number of fantasies from many periods and many cultures. Her cyclopedic study is a thorough and sensible treatment of a universal but essentially non-sensible genre.

Elizabeth Waterston, retired Professor of English and co-editor of *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery*, is writing a guide to Canadian children's literature for the *Twayne World Author Series*.

DELICATE SOLIDITY AND WHIMSY . . . A WINNING MIX

Sleepers. Dayal Kaur Khalsa. Illus. author. Tundra, 1988. 24 pp., cloth \$8.95 ISBN 0-88776-212-3; **I want a dog.** Dayal Kaur Khalsa. Illus. author. Tundra, 1987. 24 pp., cloth \$14.95. ISBN 0-88776-196-8.



Sleepers by Dayal Kaur Khalsa is a small compact delight that puts the lie to the publisher's maxim that a rhymed story or poem does not have wide appeal. Khalsa's speaker is a blissfully chatty youngster (a preschooler?) whose gender is not significant, but whose tone of voice is so true to that age which knows it all because they drove everyone mad the previous year asking questions.

As author/illustrator, Khalsa has balanced her text and visuals with admirable simplicity. In her solid tempera and strong colours, Khalsa's illustrations shine on the page. The text is brief but steady, as the speaker pronounces upon the sleepers known in the family and neighbourhood. Within the rhymed itemization, is the repeated assertion, "I never sleep" which eventually creates an even lulling mood ideal for bedtime when capitulation seems acceptable and welcome.

Longer in text and with a more challenging vocabulary, *I want a dog* is a slightly off-centre little story of childish persistence (and apparent success) in the face of adult pragmatism. Wrapped in a cover that is surely a deliberate homage to Georges Seurat, the greater portion of this tale (if you'll pardon the pun) is devoted to May's pitch to her parents for a dog and her eventual disciplined (if eccentric) demonstration that she can care for one. The fact that she uses a roller skate as her canine stand-in adds a fillip of whimsy, which Khalsa's appreciative public has come to expect and enjoy.