

At the crossroads of critical methods

When we planned this issue of *CCL*, we envisioned submitting our discipline to the rigour and demands of recent critical methods. We didn't know precisely which methodologies we should examine, but we deplored the fact that criticism of children's literature seldom goes beyond the traditional search for sources or for biographical background. The newer critical theories, especially those coming from Europe, have not been applied extensively to our field.

What we offer here is a first attempt at opening new interpretive avenues. Appropriately, in our first article, Professors Wallace and Slemon show the startling connection between the production of children's literature in the mid-nineteenth century and the imperial use of metaphors of childhood as applied to colonies. The four essays that follow focus less on the historicity of our ideas about children and more on the strategies of Canadian texts. Maria Nikolajeva analyzes Janet Lunn's *The root cellar* in the light of new theories of intertextuality. Roderick McGillis uses the work of Genette, among others, to theorize about the "voice" in children's stories, as distinct from stories for adults. Mary Harker deftly uncovers in Brian Doyle's novels elements illustrating Bakhtin's notion of "carnival." Using Kristeva's notion of the semiotic, Marnie Parsons argues for a reexamination of the "nonsense" of Dennis Lee's verse.

All the essays in this issue, in spite of varying approaches and theoretical commitments, are united in the desire to move away from readings of children's literature that maintain traditional disciplinary methodologies and boundaries. In future issues we hope to present other ways of moving beyond the critical crossroad.