

Mary Norton. Jon C. Stott. Ed. Lois Kuznets. Twayne, 1994. 158 pp. cloth. ISBN 0-8957-7054-2.

In this first book of criticism on Mary Norton's preeminent contribution to children's literature, Jon C. Stott retraces the recurring patterns of Norton's "improbable fictions." While revealing the congruencies between her life, her times and her storytelling, Stott juxtaposes Norton's bildungromans with those of other literary giants and adopts contemporary theories of narrative including reader response and feminist criticism, to enable his reinterpretation of the timeless qualities of Norton's canon. Thus according to Stott, Norton's innovation in female character development is to portray female experience the way a feminist would. Stott also argues that story and storytelling acquire central theme stature in her novels and readers respond as active co- and re-creators. Further, Norton's use of the frame narrative, her clarification of the relationship of narration to meaning, and her creation of intertextuality between her novels result in superior literature exemplifying Barthes's notions of *scriptible* and *jouissance*. Stott's literary expertise make this critical text an important scholarly reference.

Joyce A. Wilkinson is a professor in holistic and aesthetic education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto where she teaches graduate courses in Canadian children's literature.

Scary Science. Sylvia Funston. Illus. Dušan Petričić. Owl Books, 1996. 64 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 1-895688-53-1.

The author starts with a fantastic topic and proceeds to treat it in a fun way. This is a fascinating look at vampires, witches, UFOs, ghosts, and legendary monsters. Scattered throughout are sidebars, whimsical drawings, and photographs packed with interesting tidbits of information. There are a few quizzes to encourage participation, and simple yet effective activities that require minimal equipment. The text encourages a healthy skepticism while maintaining a sense of wonder and curiosity about many of the unanswered puzzles in our world. Particularly well-done are the speculative what-if scenarios and questions, and the use of puns and witticisms. This book is highly recommended as a great read for those eight years old and above.

Space. Bobbie Kalman and Niki Walker. Illus. Crabtree, 1997. 32 pp. Price unknown. ISBN 0-86505-638-2 (library bound), 0-86505-738-9 (paperback).

The hardcover version of this book is sturdy, attractive, and bright. Its high-quality illustrations are enticing. The fact that the captions are printed at the