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PASTORALISM AND PASTORAL ROMANCE IN TWENTIETH CENTURY CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The Ohio State University

Ph.D. 1982

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PASTORALISM AND PASTORAL ROMANCE
IN TWENTIETH CENTURY CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Barbara Ann Chatton, B.A., M.L.S.

The Ohio State University
1982

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Children's Literature as a Part of all Literature

Children's literature has often been considered to be a step-child of the main body of literature: a genre that is created for a particular audience, requiring a particular kind of criticism. Even so staunch a defender of good literature for children as Paul Hazard sees children's literature as part of the universal force of creative writing but maintains that such literature should be different from literature for adults. The first sentence in his classic *Books, Children and Men* is "Children and grownups belong to different worlds."¹ By asserting that the literature for children is somehow different from the mainstream of literature for adults, Hazard sets it aside from the mainstream in terms of the kinds of criticism applied to it.

On the other hand, as Betty Brett points out in her study of recent criticism of children's literature, critics have insisted that children's literature is not merely a subcategory with different traits, but a part of all literature, subject to the

same criticisms and interpretations as all literature. Lillian Smith states that considered reading of children's literature reveals that identical artistic standards prevail in the literature for children and adults. Smith says critics who appraise works for children 'should have a conviction that children's literature as literature is significant, with its values rooted in all literature.'² John Rowe Townsend says in the introduction to his history of children's literature that children's books must be judged as part of literature in general, and by the same standards as adult books: "A good children's book must not only be pleasing to children: it must be a good book in its own right."³ Eleanor Cameron supports this contention in the introduction to her book of criticism of fantasy literature, adding, "When it comes to children's literature, the fatal point of view on the part of the lay reader, the writer or the critic is to consider that it exists in a vacuum instead of within the frame of reference of all literature."⁴ More recently, Roger Sale, previously an "adult" literary critic, as he calls himself, has written


criticism of children's literature because he feels that it has been neglected. If the most common definition of the function of literature is to give profit and delight, Sale maintains, then children's literature is an important part of the mainstream of literature because it offers profit and delight just as surely as does the literature for adults.  

American Cultural Values

If American children's literature is part of the mainstream of American literature, one would expect to find the qualities common to American literature in American children's books. Critics of American literature for children have tended to evaluate children's works largely in terms of the values that are consciously passed on to children through literature, including attitudes about race, sex roles, appropriate behavior for children, class, equality and so on. Few critics have examined how children's literature reflects the cultural values which have played important roles in American literature.

These cultural values are the unconscious beliefs held by Americans about what America is and who Americans are. Richard Chase defines them as our attitudes about reality which have been

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modified by romance. He sees the romantic tradition as a strong element in our literature from the early nineteenth century to the present day, revealing itself most clearly in the novels which are nostalgic for the virgin land of pioneer days or the simple lifestyle of the farmer, citing examples from the works of James Fenimore Cooper, Mark Twain, and Ernest Hemingway.

Henry Nash Smith calls this kind of attitude a cultural myth, which he defines as an "intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image." It is part of the collective American mind, not an individual belief. Smith feels that American mythology clearly reflects the influence of the west: "the pull of the vacant continent" on the American mind. The basis of most of our cultural myths according to Smith, lies in the conflict between our belief in the romantic notion of escaping to the lush and bountiful wilderness, and our equally romantic desire to tame that wilderness with settlements of small farms.

Leo Marx has summarized all of these "cultural symbols" as being differing forms of pastoralism which, he feels, has a peculiar intensity in the American experience. He sees pastoralism as a


yearning for a simpler more harmonious style of life closer to nature which arose in American literature even as the wilderness was being tamed and settled.

**Pastoralism Defined**

American pastoralism has its roots in the European pastoral tradition. For a number of years "pastoral" referred to a particular style of poetry first used by the Greek poet Theocritus in the third century B.C. in which such conventions as the use of the shepherd, the pastoral dialogue and the pastoral elegy were used to convey nostalgic yearning for the simple way of life of the shepherds. This way of life, like that of Eden before the fall, brooked no unhappiness and provided an abundance of all that was necessary to survive without work. As the cities of Europe grew and industrialization began to make itself felt, the character of the pastoral changed, but it retained the longing for simplicity. Late eighteenth and nineteenth century poets wrote not of fair shepherdesses and piping shepherds, but of the healthy, robust and happy life of the peasant in contrast to the life of the city. As Marinelli has pointed out, pastoral literature is now much more broadly defined to include not merely the Arcadian pastures but ordinary country landscapes. He maintains that the modern pastoral most often represents a search for simplicity over complexity. But it is still a nostalgic longing, coupled with a sense of loss, for
a simpler time and place, what he calls "...the art of the backward glance". 9

Pastoralism concerns a time or place removed from the present. Pastoral time is past time, whether it is as distant as the shepherds of the ancient world, or as recent as the author's own childhood. Pastoral place is a place that is removed from civilization. It may be the lushness of a lost eden, the simple life of the farmer, or the timeless world of some less defined rural landscape where life follows the simple patterns of nature. Pastoralism can be defined as a glorification of the rural lifestyle at the expense of or in contrast to the life of the city and the artifice of civilization. Since the time of Theocritus it has consistently set up a contrast between the artificial setting of the city and the more natural rural setting. In the words of John F. Lynen: "It is always the product of a very highly developed society and arises from the impulse to look backward with yearning and a degree of nostalgia toward the simpler, purer life which such a society has left behind." 10 Yi-Fu Tuan feels that it reflects both a longing for the historic past and a longing for childhood: "What people in advanced societies lack ... is the gentle, unselfconscious


involvement with the physical world that prevailed in the past when the tempo of life was slower, and that young children still enjoy.\textsuperscript{11}

**American Pastoralism**

Pastoral poetry was at a height of renewed popularity as the settlers began to arrive in numbers on the American continent. This new frontier with its vast expanses of wilderness, its own version of the pastoral swain, in the person of the "Noble Savage," and its appeal as a retreat in which to build the new world in the garden, was a fertile field for the growth of an American pastoral literature.

American pastoralism takes several forms. One of these encompasses an "agrarian vision" of American life. Agrarianism is the form of pastoralism in which the life of the small farmer and his work are idealized as the ultimate lifestyle for Americans. Richard Hofstadter has identified agrarianism as a dominant theme in our history and literature.\textsuperscript{12} Thomas Jefferson was the most eloquent spokesman for this agrarian vision of a prosperous countryside sprinkled with countless small farms tenanted by gentlemen farmers.


A second aspect of pastoralism is the peculiarly American form in which the hero encounters and must deal with all the wild and uncultivated aspects of the wilderness. While traditionally pastoralism represented a clash between nature and civilization, in American thought it has a third dimension. Nature has two distinct faces. Pastoralism is, as Leo Marx points out, "... somewhere between and in relation to the opposing forces of civilization and nature."\(^{13}\) Toliver sees this contrast as one between idyllic nature (represented by the farm) and antipastoral nature (represented by the wilderness). Antipastoral nature is wintry, indifferent, or cruel, and a place of unrequited love and aging, while idyllic nature is represented by the life of the gentleman farmer, and is vernal, humanized, and a place of love and renewal.\(^{14}\)

Yi-Fu Tuan has summarized these notions about wilderness, garden, and city into several useful models which will be used to clarify points about pastoralism in the text.\(^{15}\) Tuan suggests that in the pastorals of Alexandrian Greece, as well as those of eighteenth and nineteenth century England, when pastoralism enjoyed a renaissance, the model would represent a juxtaposition of two positions. On the one hand there was the city and on the other there was the pastoral nature of the countryside.

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\(^{13}\)Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 23.


\(^{15}\)Tuan, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
Early New England settlers evoked a more Biblical model because of the presence on the continent of a commodity unknown in Europe: the wilderness. In this model, the town or village, which was also the garden in a Biblical sense, was the edenic area which was set against the profane area of the wilderness.

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the United States, this model expanded into what Tuan calls the ideal of the "middle landscape" with the movement of the settlers across the continent and the increasing impact of the idea of Jeffersonian agrarianism. This threefold model includes an edenic middle landscape, of small farms and yeoman farmers, which is threatened, on one side by the profane wilderness and on the other, by the increasingly profane city.

More recently, Tuan suggests, this model has been altered again and has returned to the earlier twofold variety. The edenic middle landscape now includes small rural towns as well as small farms. The previously threatening wilderness has diminished to the point where it is now threatened itself. Together this rural landscape and this threatened wilderness landscape form the edenic part of the model and both are set against the new "wilderness" of the city.

Traditionally pastoralism, while expressing a longing for the lost simplicity of past times, has contained an element of irony, in that while the rural is idealized at the expense of the city, the hero recognizes in the end that the future lies with the
city: the garden is only a myth, and for better or worse, his or her lot must be thrown in with that of civilization. More commonly in American experience, it is only the wilderness, the wild uncultivated garden, that cannot support the future. In American pastorals, there is a middle ground of retreat from both the city and the wilderness: the agrarian vision of the garden.

Pastoralism in American Children's Books

An informal survey of books popular with American children in the past indicates that pastoral novels have played an important role in the literature for children. James Fenimore Cooper's "Leatherstocking tales" which follow the lone wilderness life of Natty Bumppo until civilization overtakes him, follow the pastoral pattern as do countless dime novels that mimicked Cooper's style. Lucinda Hardwick Mackethan points out that the Uncle Remus stories are actually pastoral in that they hark back with longing to the simple life of the plantation in the heyday of the rural south.16 Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn expresses this same nostalgia for an earlier time when people and nature lived in harmony.

Modern American pastoral novels for children often express a dual nostalgia. The longing is not only for a rural landscape where the cares and pressures of the city can be set aside, but for

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a simpler time when those cares and pressures did not exist. This second nostalgia may be a simple longing for an earlier historical era in which life seemed to be better, or it may be a very specific nostalgia for childhood. In the Victorian era, childhood came to be thought of as a golden age in which a child was happy and secure, and yet, somehow more able to receive wisdom and insights no longer available to adults. William Empson suggests that the child figure became the replacement for the simple rustic of earlier pastorals at this time. He suggests that Alice in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is this kind of figure, viewing the foibles of the "civilization" of Wonderland with childish amazement. Peter Marinelli also describes this nostalgia for the "pastoral of childhood" calling it a time of innocence which every person can remember.

Raymond Williams writes that the dual nostalgia for place and time has occurred because of the rapid changes which have occurred in the last century. Williams feels that every writer of the "country experience" is reliving the happier, more rural experience

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18 Marinelli, op. cit., p. 4.

of his or her own childhood, although the nature of that rural experience is constantly being modified by technology and the incursions of the city into the life of the countryside.

Critic Annette Kolodny has even suggested that this nostalgia for one's childhood and particularly for one's rural childhood has psychological implications. She says there is a "consistent evocation of the land as feminine and the vocabulary of a desired return to maternal comforts and infantile gratifications."^20

Raymond Williams points out that there are actually two time frames in the pastoral writings. One of these evokes a past "golden age" in which life was simpler and better than in the present. These are the pastorals which make deliberate comparisons between the rural landscape and the city and find the city lacking. The second form Williams says evokes the timeless tranquility of rural life. In this pastoral form no overt contrast is made between urban and rural society or past and present time. This type of pastoral merely implies that life in the setting of the pastoral is superior to that of the city by focusing upon the rural lifestyle. Linda Levstik finds this second kind of pastoral, in which the criticism of the city is unstated, to be common in the books which were written for children in the nineteen twenties and thirties.^21

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She says these novels echo the anti-urban, anti-technology themes of adult novels of the period, but instead of writing about the negative conditions of urban America, many focus on the timeless traditions of the rural existence. The novels emphasize what Levstik calls the "rural myth" of pastoral beauty, homespun virtues, family strength, and peace, or the richness of "primitive" cultures through collections of folk tales and stories about Black Americans and Native Americans. Authors for children chose to romanticize rural or "primitive" existence rather than to condemn urban, technological life. This romance is perhaps not surprising. Richard Chase has suggested that America's most characteristic literary form is the romance. American novels are more likely to contain elements of the picturesque and heroic, and to have a tendency toward melodrama and idyll than to deal with moral or political questions directly.22

As a result, American pastoral novels for children like all pastorals, fall into two distinct categories. Some are ironically pastoral, looking back with longing to a golden age or place where all is in harmony, but accepting the fact that one can no longer live there. Others, which Stott has suggested should more accurately be called "romance" are romantically pastoral, describing and enjoying

22Chase, op. cit., p. ix.
that golden age or place without necessarily comparing it to contemporary life.²³

Purpose of the Study

If literature for children is part of the mainstream of American literature, and pastoralism has played an important role in American cultural ideas and literature, then one would expect to find evidence of pastoralism in American literature for children.

The purpose of the study is to investigate a body of American children's literature for pastoral ideas and themes; more specifically to see if they express common pastoral values. If pastoralism plays a role in children's literature, the body of literature might be expected to yield works which include the following ideas:

1. Life in a rural setting is better, easier, and more satisfying than life in the city.
2. Life on a small farm (agrarianism) is the ultimate kind of existence.
3. Life in past times held more promise, was more interesting, more self-sufficient and satisfying than the present.

In addition, because children's literature is part of the mainstream of all literature, and because pastoralism is an ideal passed on through American literature and culture, the works will be examined

for the variety of ways in which they express the values of pastoralism to American children.

Definition of Terms

Agrarianism a form of pastoralism in which the life of the small farmer and his work is considered to be the ideal lifestyle

Nostalgia a wistful, often sentimental desire to return to some past period or irrecoverable condition. An adult longing for a time which no longer exists or a longing for a place which has irrecoverably changed

Pastoral Novel a novel which glorifies the rural lifestyle but which, in the end, rejects this lifestyle for the life of the city

Pastoral Romance a novel which glorifies the rural lifestyle and which implies that it is superior to the lifestyle of the city

Pastoralism a glorification of the rural lifestyle at the expense of and in contrast to the artifice of civilization and the life of the city

Primitivism a form of pastoralism in which the life of the wild, the uncultivated and the primitive is considered to be the ideal lifestyle

Limitations of the Study

This will not be a statistical study of elements of pastoralism in children's books, but rather, an analysis of books with pastoral themes. It will include a limited selection of books of fiction for children which have American settings. It will not include non-fiction or picture books.

Selection of Books

A logical choice for a body of books to examine is those which have been selected as winners and honor books for the John Newbery Medal, given annually since 1922 by the Children's Services Division
of the American Library Association for the "most distinguished contribution to American literature for children" by an American author. Precedents have been set for using at least the winners of the award to aid in reaching conclusions about American children's literature, including Jacobs' study of democratic acculturation, Lowry and Chambers' study of middle class morality, Bard's study of social studies themes, and Elkins' study of the representation of ethnic groups in these works.23

The composition of the body which awards the medal assures that those books which are selected do not represent any one school of criticism or the influence of any particular person over a period of time. At its inception the medal was selected by a vote of all the members of the division, then it was assigned to committees which have varied in size from fifteen to thirty people. The members of these committees are selected annually from a variety of fields, and include school and public librarians, educators and professional critics. Because members of the committee differ from year to year and because all the books published within a given year are considered to be possible candidates for the award, those books which are selected as winners and honor books offer a representative selection of American critical belief over time as to what constitutes not only the "best" in American children's literature, but what is

24 Full citations for these studies are included in the Bibliography.
typically American. The winners could be expected to reflect uncon­conscious ideas about what it is to be an American and about the American experience. If pastoralism plays an important role in children's literature, it should be well represented among these books.

One hundred fifteen of the Newbery Medal books are fictional works with American settings. Included among these are works of historical fiction, books with contemporary settings, and fantasies with American settings.

Procedures

This study is an examination of a body of novels selected from among the one hundred fifteen winners and honor books of the Newbery Medal which have American settings. A preliminary reading of the one hundred fifteen novels indicated that sixty showed evidences of pastoral ideas, themes or structures.

These sixty novels were then read for a second time. This second reading revealed the broad outlines of four aspects of pastoralism which appeared in a number of the novels. These four aspects include the following:

1. Agrarianism and the frontier: These novels look back on the days in which Americans saw it as their mission, their "manifest destiny," to inhabit the lands of the west and to tame the wilderness. The best known of these historical novels are those by Laura Ingalls Wilder, five of which have been Newbery Honor books. These books presented a
particularly useful example because they tell of a family which moves west several times. A number of other novels, from *The Courage of Sarah Noble* set shortly after the Revolutionary War in Connecticut, to *Moccasin Trail* set in Oregon over a century later, concern the settling of the lands of the west. Selected novels were examined for evidences of common attitudes about the wilderness, and about the role of farmers in taming it in various settings and time periods. (28 novels)

2. The wilderness pastoral: In these novels, the idyllic and antipastoral aspects of nature are contrasted. Among the Newbery winners are a number of "survival stories" in which a child hero is forced to live in the wilds and survive. These include such books as *Indian Captive*, *Incident at Hawk's Hill*, and *Julie of the Wolves*. While nonfiction about people who have lived in the wilds shows that often the return to civilization is fatal (in, for example, books about feral children or Kroeber's *Ishi in Two Worlds*), the pastoral novel perceives the return as the only possible future. An examination of the novels revealed what attitudes the authors held about the wilderness experience, and its ultimate benefits. (8 novels)

3. The pastoral romance: This is the aspect of pastoralism in which the life of the person who lives in a rural setting in contemporary times is perceived to healthier, happier,
and more satisfying than the life of the person in the city. The clearest example of this idea among the Newbery Winners is Virginia Sorensen's Miracles on Maple Hill, in which a city family moves to the country in hopes that the father can recover from the physical and psychological wounds he has suffered in the War. Within a year, the healing cycle of nature has brought miraculous recovery and a once-again close and loving family. Using this and other examples, the role of nature in this process, the life of the farm as part of nature, and the negative aspects of city life presented in the novels were compared and contrasted. (17 novels)

4. The "sheep" novels: A brief glance at the Newbery Medal list showed that five winners were entirely concerned with the occupation of sheepherding, and, in addition, several others, notably novels about the Navajo Indians, revolved around the keeping of sheep. These novels were examined to determine whether there was a common symbolic significance in the use of the sheepherding image in the novels, and whether this was a reflection of the larger pastoral tradition. (7 novels)

After the sorting process, the books within each category were then read a third time, as a group, in order to establish the relationships, patterns and common ideas among the novels in each category.
Organization of the Study

Chapter I has provided a background for the study by defining pastoralism, American pastoralism, and pastoralism in American children's books. The purpose of the study, its limitations and definitions of terms are presented, along with a description of the process by which the books were selected and the procedures followed in the study.

Chapter II is an investigation of the twenty-eight novels which are set on the American frontier. Issues such as the role of the pastoral hero in these novels, the role of technology, the role of the wilderness, the conception of the farm, and the pattern of pastoral existence are examined.

Chapter III is an examination of the eight novels which deal with the American wilderness. The role of the pastoral hero in these novels is evaluated, as well as the image of the wilderness itself, of wild animals, and of Native Americans in relation to the wilderness and to the agrarian world. The various uses to which the wilderness is put in the novels are examined and compared.

Chapter IV looks at the seventeen pastoral romances, which overtly or tacitly reject the world of the city for the life of the country. The role of tame animals, the small farm, and the small town are examined along with the sense of nostalgia and the seasonal structure of the romance.
Chapter V examines the seven novels which deal with the life cycle of sheep, attempting to explain why so many novels with this subject content should have won the Newbery Medal.

Chapter VI provides a summary of the major ideas and patterns in the pastoral novels for children. Suggestions for further study in this area are included.
CHAPTER II

THE FRONTIER PASTORAL

Background: The American Frontier

Frederick Jackson Turner suggested in his landmark work *The Frontier in American History* that the frontier, that line of settlement between the wilderness to the west and civilization to the east, was the most significant factor in the shaping of American history.¹ Turner felt that in each western area of settlement, a constant recurrence of the growth process of civilization took place; a kind of evolution of democratic society. The first inhabitants of a frontier area must adapt themselves almost wholly to the ways of the primitive inhabitants using moccasin, canoe, and Indian trail to survive the wilderness. But these pioneers, having come from civilization, begin the process of change that gradually transforms the wilderness. Turner saw a steady progression from wilderness to civilization across the continent as he looked back over the course of the American westward movement. First, there were the buffalo alone, followed by the Indians. Then came the first pioneer inhabitants, the hunters, trappers, and fur-traders, men

who adapted to the wilderness. They were followed by the cattle raisers and the pioneer farmers. These soon led to small settlements which led to cities.

Turner was summarizing in this argument a sense of movement that has existed in American minds for centuries. In his Letters from an American Farmer, written in 1782, J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur had seen this same kind of progression. He pictured a three-fold division of society as the continent was settled, including a fringe of remote frontier settlements, a middle region of comfortable farms, and in the east, a growing region of cities and of wealthy centers of trade with Europe.

Benjamin Franklin, although a man of the city, felt that the ways of the wild must make way for the farmers who were the first step toward civilization of the continent. Franklin felt that agriculture was the only "honest way" for men to acquire wealth "wherein man received a real increase of the seed thrown into the ground, a kind of continuous miracle, wrought by the hand of God in his favor as a reward for his innocent life and virtuous industry."2 Franklin felt that it was the design of Providence that the wilderness be opened "to make room for the cultivators of the earth."3

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Thomas Jefferson was the strongest visionary of an agrarian society moving gradually west to people the continent with small prosperous farms. Jefferson carried out his vision through his support of the expeditions of Lewis and Clark. He saw these expeditions as the beginnings of an expansion that would allow civilization to reach the farther edges of the continent in stages until all would eventually be settled according to his ideal society:

"Let a philosophic observer commence a journey from the savages of the Rocky Mountains, easterly towards our sea-coast. These he would observe in the earliest stage of association living under no law but that of nature, (subsisting) and covering themselves with the flesh and skins of wild beasts. He would next find those on our frontiers in a pastoral state, raising domestic animals, to supply the defects of hunting. Then succeed our own semi-barbarous citizens, the pioneers of the advance of civilization, and so in his progress he would meet the gradual shades of improving man until he could reach his, as yet, most improved state in our sea-port towns."\(^4\)

All of these images fall into the three-fold model or pattern which Tuan has suggested is typical of the eighteenth and nineteenth century agrarian ideal, in which the frontier experience, the experience of the frontier farmer in particular, seems to be a kind of middle ground between the wild and profane existence of the

wilderness and the heightened civilization of the city. Comfortably in the center of this model is the small landed farmer who brings the beginnings of civilization to the west through the cultivation of and settlement on the land.

If one examines the twenty-eight Newbery winners and honor books which are concerned with the frontier experience in the west, it becomes clear that this small farmer is the favored hero of twentieth century children’s novels. Of these, four are concerned with entrepreneurship and the rise of business in the west, one concerns an Indian captivity, and twenty-two are set on small frontier farms. It is the pastoral farming experience on the frontier which intrigues and impresses the twentieth century writer for children.

The discovery and exploration of the frontier plays a role in only two books from this list. One honor book, Scott O’Dell’s The King’s Fifth, concerns the exploration and mapping of the southwest. Agnes Hewes’ The Codfish Musket, is also about exploration, the journeys of Lewis and Clark in particular. In it the role of Thomas Jefferson in the opening of the west is re-created. Jefferson appears

5These include Phyllis Crawford’s Hello the Boat, about river barges, Agnes Hewes’ The Codfish Musket on the market for guns, Stephen Meader’s Boy With a Pack about itinerant peddlars, and Cornelia Meigs’ Swift Rivers about logging.

6Lois Lenski’s Indian Captive.
as a major character in the book, spouting such benign agrarian words as, "What is there so steadying, so comforting as the concerns of the soil?"\(^7\)

Furthermore, little emphasis is placed on the first people into the wilderness, those pioneer hunters and trappers. R.W.B. Lewis has said that most of the heroic characters in American literature are outsiders, detached from civilization, living in the wilderness.\(^8\) He suggests that James Fenimore Cooper's Natty Bumppo, the model for hundreds of dime novel heroes, is a major example of this type. Certainly figures such as Johnny Appleseed, Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett, as well as Mike Fink, have all shared in this popular image of men who are outside of "normal" society and more at home in the wild. However, although award-winning non-fiction has been written about all four of these figures, the outsider is not an important figure in the novels for children about the frontier. In only one book is the lead character one of these lone "pathfinding" personalities. In McGraw's *Moccasin Trail*, Jim, the protagonist, lived for years with the Crow Indians, then became a trapper, after running away from his father's farm in Missouri. Jim is an outsider, untrusting of white settlers, whom he calls "bourgeways" who fight

\(^7\)Agnes Hewes, *The Codfish Musket* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doron, 1941), p. 165.

and plow the wilderness instead of learning to live in it. He is at a crossroads in his life at the beginning of the novel, as he sees the beaver which he traps for a living fast disappearing and finds it increasingly hard to make a living. He is D.H. Lawrence's typical American hero: "hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer." But even this loner is taken over by the agrarian vision. He is "evolving" from the life of the trapper into the life of the farmer. He is, as A.B. Guthrie points out "killing the thing he loves" believing that the abundance will go on forever. But Jim's Crow medicine dream at age fourteen presages his future. In it, he is attacked by a grizzly, but upon Jim's reciting of the words of the twenty-third psalm, the huge wild creature backs down. Through an unlikely series of events, Jim is re-united with his family from Missouri and journeys with them to Oregon where, after a struggle with his conscience and his past, he settles down and becomes a farmer. In the end, he realizes his medicine dream, with the green pastures and still waters of the agrarian vision banishing the bear of the wilderness.

The Family as Hero

In all of the other novels it is not a loner or an outsider but a member of a family who is the hero. Even those young people who

9 Lawrence, op. cit., p. 62.

start out on the journey west alone are soon attached to a family. In fact it could be said that the family itself is the hero of the novels for young people.

This does not mean that these farm novels set on the frontier are outside of the mainstream of American literature. Richard Sykes has commented that R.W.B. Lewis over-generalized in his discussion of the loner as American hero, pointing out that other "types" have played important roles in American literature and experience as well. Richard Hofstadter maintains that, because of the prevalence of the agrarian vision, the yeoman farmer had an equally important role as the American hero, being represented as the ideal man and citizen as he worked his small plot of land with his family by his side. And Roger Abrahams indicates that this idea of the family having more importance than the individual is part of the stereotype of the "peasant" or "folk" society which has entered into the pastoral tradition.

The typical family of these frontier novels is nuclear, with a strong father figure. As if to cover both the image of the half-wild pathfinder and that of the settler, the father figure of these novels

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is often represented as being some of both. He is the stoic hunter who would seem to prefer a life in the wilderness were it not for the demands of his family. The roots of these dual male figures may lie in the image of Daniel Boone, who appears in American literature and folklore as both the woodsman, hunter and pioneer, and as the family man and farmer. Boone longs for open spaces: "I had not been two years at the licks before a d----d Yankee came and settled down within a hundred miles of me."\(^{14}\) And yet he brings his family with him into the wilderness and inevitably, settlement follows.

The best-known father figure of the novels of the frontier written for children is probably Pa Ingalls, the father in Laura Ingalls Wilder's autobiographical novels of the west, five of which were Newbery honor books. Pa, like Daniel Boone, feels constricted in the slowly civilizing woods of Wisconsin and then again on the prairie of Minnesota, when the town begins to spread out. He notices that game is getting scarce: "Pa did not like country so old and worn out that the hunting was poor... the hunting's good in the west, a man can get all the meat he wants."\(^{15}\) Laura herself "wanted to travel on and on over the miles, and see what lay beyond the hills. That was the way Pa felt about the west, Laura knew."\(^{16}\)

\(^{14}\)Daniel Boone, quoted in Smith, op. cit., p. 54.

\(^{15}\)Laura Ingalls Wilder, By the Shores of Silver Lake (New York: Harper Brothers, 1941), p. 4.

\(^{16}\)Laura Ingalls Wilder, These Happy Golden Years (New York: Harper Brothers, 1943), p. 157.
Pa's longing to go west for more game and more room is echoed in the other novels. John Noble in The Courage of Sarah Noble moves his family far out into Indian territory after the French and Indian war to settle new land. In The Tree of Freedom, the Venable family follows their Pappy from the settled lands of Carolina to Kentucky in 1780 to live on the open land, where people never go hungry; the nuts, berries, turkey, bear, deer, elk, and buffalo will keep his family alive until their farm is settled. And there is Caddie Woodlawn's father who "was entirely happy on the outskirts of civilization. Here he could breathe freely as he had never done in the narrow streets of Boston."\(^{17}\)

But Pa Ingalls and the others move not only to have the freedom to hunt new lands. They move west for the opportunities the west will provide to make a new start. On the banks of Plum Creek, Pa is nearly destroyed by grasshoppers, flooding, and a poor crop of wheat and oats, and is forced to go to work for others. When he is offered a chance to homestead along the railroad further west, he accepts and moves the family again. The land of the west is painted as being the land of milk and honey, where soil is rich and food is plentiful.

Pappy Venable in Tree of Freedom knows it will also be a land free of the taxes and politics of the settled tidewater. It will allow

him freedom to begin again. For the orphans of Marion Hurd McNealy's *The Jumping Off Place*, who take up their uncle's homestead claim in 1910, it also means a new start. For the down and out family of a drifter father in Sarah Schmidt's *The New Land*, the chance to settle on a homestead in the Wyoming Irrigation Project in the 1930's, is a last resort, a new chance after years of failure and disappointment. Farming represents an opportunity for them all to begin again in the west.

And there are the immigrants. A Dutch family settles the Hudson Valley in 1757 to escape religious persecution in the old country in Walter D. Edmonds' *The Matchlock Gun*. A family of Swedish immigrants come to farm and work in the forest of Minnesota in Cornelia Meigs' *Swift Rivers*. In the Havighursts' *Song of the Pines* a Norwegian family comes to Wisconsin to farm when their small farm in the old country is no longer profitable. And a young Irishman befriended by a family of German immigrant farmers comes to American to buy a dairy farm in Wisconsin in Robert Lawson's *The Great Wheel*.

Thus, in twenty-two of the twenty-eight novels, the families head west, their intention being to acquire land, and to settle down to create farms out of the wilderness.

And if the father is the pioneer, the farmer who is willing to go into the wilderness to live for the sake of civilization, the mother is represented just as frequently as the symbol of the city
which follows. Quite often the mother is the voice of civilization, questioning the move into the wilderness:

"I declare, I'd feel 'most content to settle down in any huddle of houses now."
"That's the woman of it," her husband retorted.
"Neighbors and gossiping from morning till night—that's all you think about. But when it gets so settled a body can see houses on three sides from his own door, then I say it's time to be off where there's land to spare."[18]

"It's a fine place we have here, but there isn't much game. Makes a fellow think of places out West where..."
"Where there are no schools for the children, Charles..."[19]

This conflict is played out within each pioneer family. The father leads the movement west, risking life in the wilderness. The mother follows, but always with the voice for settlement, the voice for civilization in the wilderness.

She is Mrs. Noble, in Alice Dalgliesh's *The Courage of Sarah Noble*, who stays behind when her husband goes with their young daughter to find a homesite in the wilderness, who decries the Indians as dangerous savages, and who is greatly upset that her daughter has become browned by the sun, and adopted Indian dress. She is Mrs. Woodlawn in Brink's *Caddie Woodlawn*, who eagerly awaits her issues of the latest Boston papers and *Godey's Lady Book*, who despairs of

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her daughter Caddie ever being a lady, and who insists her children call her "mother" instead of "ma". She is Mrs. Venable in Caudill's Tree of Freedom, who leaves her beloved tidewater, but cannot quite let go of the mirror, the music, the reading aloud, that her husband decries as a "fancy waste of time". She is Wilder's Ma Ingalls, who raises all of her daughters to be polite and never to talk back, and who insists on sunbonnets being worn at all times. In each novel, the woman's role is to raise her children to be mannerly and civilized, to educate them, to clothe them appropriately, and to encourage them in their aspirations. She brings a sense of comfort and home to the wilderness.

One character who becomes less human and more a prototype for "the woman as carrier of civilization and its virtues" is Laura Ingalls Wilder's own mother. In Laura's notebooks of her original writings, Ma Ingalls was an earthier woman, given to informal speech and employing the same humourous philosophy as Pa. In the published versions of the stories, Ma appears as a contrast to Pa's freedom-loving and informal ways. It is Ma who is pious and speaks in cultured tones (it is constantly stressed that she was a teacher before she married Pa). She chides Pa when he tells saucy anecdotes or wishes to roam further west. Her duty is to educate her children, to raise them to be intelligent and ladylike girls. Laura wanted

above all things for her mother to represent the values of the home, to be the center and the strength of her family. So, in the novels, she becomes a gentler and more pious woman than the expansive, robust woman that Laura's mother was in life. She becomes, like Mrs. Woodlawn and Mrs. Venable and Mrs. Noble, a carefully executed symbol of civilization amidst the upheaval of pioneer farm life.

The details of this "civilizing" of life on the frontier fill the novels, from the mother's insistence on doing the weekly wash on the flatboat, in spite of the inconvenience in Crawford's Hello the Boat to Sally Keath's requiring table manners on the Oregon trail in McGraw's Moccasin Trail. Pages are spent describing the attempts to make the homesteads "homey" with contrived room-dividers, curtains at the windows, rugs, flowers, and homemade cupboards. The clearest symbols of this are those special treasured objects brought from the east. For the Venables, it is a mirror. For the Woodlawn and Keath families it is a clock, cherished and wrapped for the long journey. For the Ingalls family it is a china shepherdess, carefully placed on her own home-made shelf in each new house as the family moves west.

Life on the Frontier

All of these glimpses of the care that went into making these outposts feel like home reflect one side of a conflict about the settlers which has existed since settlement began. That conflict lies in the discrepancy between the west as a heroic ideal in which noble individuals and families risk all for the sake of civilization, and
the lawless west where settlers are dirty, poor, miserable and coarse.

Such eighteenth and nineteenth century writers as Dr. Timothy Dwight, Thomas Ashe, and Alexander Wilson, travelled to the backwoods of the frontier with their glorious vision of the farmer and were horrified to discover unkept farms, ramshackle dwellings, and monotonous meals.\textsuperscript{21} Henry Nash Smith has pointed out that few novels have been written about the pioneer farmers because, while the ideal of the yeoman farmer was a poetic one, in actuality, it was not a life made for fiction. Those few novelists who did attempt to portray life on the frontier tended to picture well-bred, educated people living exactly as one would live in the cities of the east. The coarseness of the actual life of the farmer with its day-in, day-out grinding labor, was not the stuff of which exciting plots could be made. D.H. Lawrence says: "What happens when you idealize the soil, the mother-earth, and really go back to it? Then, with overwhelming conviction it is borne in upon you..that the whole scheme of things is against you."\textsuperscript{22}

Laura Ingalls Wilder stated in \textit{The First Four Years}, a memoir published after her death, that she was hesitant to marry Almanzo

\textsuperscript{21}See Robert J. Higgs, ed. \textit{Voices from the Hills} (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1975) for examples of these writings.

\textsuperscript{22}D.H. Lawrence, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 111.
Wilder, because a farmer's life is hard on a woman and farmers never have any money, facts she never disclosed in portraying her courtship in the novels.23

The Newbery award-winning novels do, by and large, concern this very day-to-day plotless existence about which Smith feels it was so difficult to write, because they represent a pastoral vision of life on the frontier in the early days of our nation. They support the pastoral notion that things were better in the past, and that they were better on the farm.

This is not to say that the portrait of frontier existence in these novels is entirely romanticized. In fact, their appeal may well lie in the details of day-to-day struggles to survive on the frontier. Lois Lenski's Strawberry Girl, a novel of settlers in Florida in the days of its frontier, depicts a farm family doing back-breaking labor, fighting pests and drought and trying to cope with a drunken neighbor who threatens their farm, ruins crops when his stock run wild, and resents their attempts at settling.

In Blos' A Gathering of Days, Catherine Hall writes in her journal after her best friend dies, "One time Father tried to explain, to say that, country life being hard, country folk must learn to accept else they will surely be broken."24


Caudill's *Tree of Freedom* conveys the same backbreaking labor of clearing trees for a space for a cabin and removing the stumps by hand, as well as the difficulties the family experiences in trying to acquire the basic staples such as salt. Laura Ingalls Wilder's books vividly describe the monotony of winter on the prairie farm and of day-to-day chores. The difference lies in the nostalgia of the authors. They see these burdens as trials which are to be overcome and are overcome, and as contrasts to the pleasures and rewards of farming, trials which make the rewards of this life all the sweeter.

Roger Abrahams has indicated that one of the things that pastoralism does to simple rural existence is to prettify it. In the pastoral novel, life is not rude, uncomfortable or smelly. It is the city person's dream of the country. But it is also the twentieth century writer's dream of the American past. The pastoral nostalgia is not only for a place where life is better than it is in the modern city, but for a time when it was richer as well.

A number of the authors of these books have stated that they knew they were writing about the end of an era. Eloise McGraw in her preface to *Moccasin Trail* says that she is writing "... the story of the death of one era and the birth of another..." Laura

25 Abrahams, op. cit.

Ingalls Wilder wanted to write her story because she thought that she had lived through the end of an era. Carol Ryrie Brink in her Newbery acceptance speech for *Caddie Woodlawn* said that she felt that we were "about to lose a most precious contact with something which has vanished,"²⁷ so she preserved her grandmother's story for future generations.

Both Brink and Wilder admitted that they somewhat romanticized the frontier experience in their books, although they felt that they did it for the highest purposes.

**Qualities of the Pioneer**

Brink said that the most important part of the pioneer experience for children to understand was the quality of the people themselves: "... the pioneer qualities of courage, willingness to go to meet the unknown, and steadfastness under difficulty are the things most needed today, as they were then."²⁸ Wilder also wanted to impart the importance of family and courage and strength. She once wrote that the spirit of the west is what must be passed on, the spirit of "humor and cheerfulness no matter what happened...My parents possessed this frontier spirit to a marked degree...They looked ahead to better things."²⁹ And in his Newbery acceptance


²⁸Ibid., p. 144.

speech, in 1942, Walter D. Edmunds compared the frontier he portrayed in *The Matchlock Gun* to the Bataan, saying that books about the frontier experience were necessary to keep building the faith and integrity of the American people.30

These comments echo the thoughts of Frederick Jackson Turner who felt that what set the pioneer farmer so firmly at the center of all that was best in democratic life was energy, strength, inventiveness, exuberance, and practicality.31 John Lynen has said that the pastoral novel assumes an audience. It is "concerned with explaining and interpreting rural life to those who live in a quite different milieu".32 In the same way, these authors are concerned with interpreting the life of the frontier farmer to children who live in a time when the frontier and the farmer have largely vanished. And what must survive, according to these authors, is a recognition of the pioneer spirit.

Most of the novels are nostalgic. Life is portrayed as hard, but the children are protected from the worst of the ravages of wilderness and weather by their parents. If there is hardship, there


31Turner, op. cit., p. 37.

is also a warm fireside, music at the end of the day, and the sure knowledge of the love and caring of one's family. Political realities are seldom considered. One has only to compare the books which Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote with her notebooks of early drafts to see the revision process which left out the worst of the frontier experience. The notebooks reveal that she changed character as often as re-organized incident to reveal what she felt were important truths about the westward movement. As Rosa Moore, editor of her letters puts it, "Oppressive sadness, no matter what the dreary facts were, is something that Laura is persistently eager to avoid." Only one character, Mrs. Brewster, reflects a harsher reality and she is used as a contrast to Laura's practicality and good sense. Mrs. Brewster, the homesteader with whom Laura stays when she teaches school, represents the frontier dream gone sour. She is disappointed, old and wasted before her time, from a life of isolation and want. But the notebooks reveal that even Mrs. Brewster is not painted as grimly in the novels as she existed in Laura's own life. Her character has been softened and her role has been lessened.

The Pattern of the Past

Because it represents a past time period, with customs, and ways of life that have disappeared in the modern age, the day-to-day

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Rosa Moore, "Laura Ingalls Wilder and Rose Wilder Lane..." op. cit., p. 105.
life of the frontier family is rendered in great detail to allow the child reader to experience it. Laura Ingalls Wilder wanted to help children to experience "every aspect of the American frontier." It is no wonder that Ward says that Wilder's novels provide more information than "a semester's readings of the average social studies book..." Wilder has explained the late nineteenth century frontier farm so well that the reader accepts the entire picture. From the farm tasks of threshing, sowing and selling the crops, to beating the blackbirds from the corn, to the feel of grasshoppers underfoot and in one's hair as thousands of them descend upon Plum Creek, to killing the pig for sausage, to building sod huts, frame homesteads, and a real house, to baking sour apple pie and making a wedding dress, all of the details of her life are there. And so it is with The Calico Bush and Caddie Woodlawn, Tree of Freedom and A Gathering of Days as well. The details of farm life over the course of the seasons are minutely described in these and other books; that is the major thrust of the plot. In this sense, the novels make use of the circular time frame of farm life, in which the flow of the seasons, and the working of the crops determine the activities of the day, while a steady balance between the harshness of winter and the glories of spring is maintained.

34 Ibid.

Wendell Berry describes time as "the road and the wheel," with the wheel signifying the circular time of seasons, patterns and wholes which is most typical of the pastoral novel, and the road as expressing the linear time which is most typical of the western novel in which the discarding of the old and adding of the new, the sense of moving on, and of the future play such a role.36

The novels of the American west for children combine both of these patterns. On the one hand, the conflict and plot revolve around the simple cycles of weather and seasons and crops, of good times and bad times. On the other hand, the pioneer family is always struggling toward new goals, toward better crops, or more land, or more room, and a larger safer house, or better schooling for the children. In spite of the simplicity of many of the plots, and the cyclical, seasonal feeling of the books, the plots are always linear as well. This linear feeling may focus on the growth of one particular child through time, or on a struggle to accomplish a major move or event, but beyond the growth of the child or the struggle, the major thrust of these linear plots in books about the frontier is their focus on the future.

Long before John L. O'Sullivan coined the words "Manifest Destiny" in 1845, as evidenced by the words of Franklin, Jefferson, 

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and Crevecoeur, the notion of our inevitable mastery of the entirety of the American continent was firmly fixed in American minds. And the writers of novels for children have this fixed notion in mind as well. Their characters, from Pa Ingalls and John Noble to Caddie Woodlawn and the children of the novels set in the thirties, all believe that they live in moments of great import to history. The characters are conscious of their own contributions to the movement west. They see themselves as bearers of civilization into the wilderness.

And because they are the bearers of civilization, the city is never far behind them. As Hofstadter describes it, "The United States was born in the country and moved to the city." But this was not a backward progression to the cities of the east. Instead, the city followed the country, and in time, the country became the city. D.H. Lawrence saw this as the ultimate goal of that agrarian vision: "Cultivate the earth, ye gods! The Indians did that, as much as they needed. And they left off there. Who built Chicago? Who cultivated the earth until it spawned Pittsburgh, Pa.?"

In no case are these novels merely a pastoral expression of desire to return to the simple life. They are instead hymns in praise of the simple strength and endurance of people who were making

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37 Hofstadter, op. cit., p. 23.

38 Lawrence, op. cit., p. 15.
the way for something great. The life of the frontier farmer was an investment in the future.

Song of the Pines expresses this most clearly:

"We have our uncertainties and our hard work to do, but we also have opportunities that will never come again. In years to come, Americans will look back at us and see our period as a strong and happy time - in the same way that a man looks back at his youth." "You will see many changes in this country, Nils. But always remember it as it is now, unfenced and free, with the future before it... It will be better tomorrow... There will be new settlements, new roads, new people... Tomorrow, Tomorrow. Yes, tomorrow was their song."39

The wilderness will be transformed by the farm:

"While he slept he had a dream of the broad prairie and the arching sky. But it was no longer an empty land of wild pea vines and buffalo grass. He saw fine fields of corn and wheat and barley and fenced pastures dotted with fat cattle. He saw scattered farmhouses with their chimney smoke curling in the wind and big red barns with white bargeloads and white window frames. Each farmhouse had a many-colored garden around it and the grain fields stretching away."40

The Role of Technology

And always integrally connected with the prosperous visions of the American farmer was the role of technology. Much has been made


40 Ibid., p. 8.
of the image of the machine which shatters the wilderness as a powerful piece of imagery that permeates American works of literature.\footnote{See Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).} However, in the novels for children which concern the frontier the machine is never seen as a destructive force but instead is optimistically viewed as the redeemer of the farmer.

Daniel Hoffman points out that we have two varying fantasies about the west, one of an idealized past in which technology is absent, and one which looks forward to a better future which technology will help to bring about.\footnote{Daniel Hoffman, Form and Fable in American Fiction (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 75.} While the novels of the frontier are set in the past, it is the second image which pervades them.

Rarely is the farmer only a farmer. Many of the first settlers relied on their hunting skills as much as on farming. Pa Ingalls is a carpenter as well as a farmer, and tends store for the railroad. Father Woodlawn has been brought to the Wisconsin frontier to build and operate a mill for the farmers. He runs his own farm but he also runs the mill and repairs clocks and other machinery in his spare time.

In the novels about the earliest times, such as The Matchlock Gun and The Calico Bush, it is the technology of superior weapons which provides the settlers with their livelihood and their security.
Not only does hunting keep the families going, but the guns keep away the threat of enemies who may try to take their lands, whether they be the French, the English, the Indians, the unscrupulous land speculators or squatters. It is the matchlock gun and the codfish musket which have allowed the farmer to enter the wilderness unafraid.

In later novels farming machinery becomes more important. These novels picture the machine as a help to the farmer. The farmer is always in control of the machinery, whereas, in industrial centers, the machine is pictured as controlling the person. Hofstadter suggests that machinery has held more promise for American farmers because of the vast amounts of land available to them. Whereas in Europe the farmer had a small plot of land and many family members to farm it, in the United States there were vast expanses of land available, but few people to farm them. Thus, the machinery on the frontier farm, whether owned, shared or borrowed, means the difference in the size of the crop, the fields which can be plowed, the kinds of crops which can be planted, and in the end, the success of the farmer.

Not only does machinery free the farmer to do more, more easily and at less cost, machinery represents progress to the farmer. It may be the progress of more yield than last year or it may, in a larger sense, be the tie to the civilized world. Most of the novels

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43 Hofstadter, op. cit., p. 46.
focus on railroads and steamboats as symbols of connection to civilization some distance away. The Woodlawn family waits for the annual spring thaw when the steamboat comes into town bearing the news of the outside world and the papers from Boston. The Ingalls family waits for the end of the long winter when the train can once again pull into town with supplies.

The family in Crawford's *Hello-the-Boat* are typical of this kind of movement to civilization. The parents start out as teachers in an eastern city. When times become hard in the city, they retire to a small farm in the northeast. When the farm does not pay off, due to a financial recession, the family purchases a river flatboat and its members become small time entrepreneurs selling goods to farmers along the Ohio River. Their final transition to modern civilization is that they settle on a farm outside a western city (Cincinnati) and open a small factory for making steamboat parts. Thus, one family with the help of the machine, traces the progress of civilization from east to west, from city to farm to city again in the ultimate dream of the progress of civilization. This glorification of the machine is common to the novels. Immigrants often see the possibilities of the machine as the true difference between America and the old world. In Havighurst's *Song of the Pines*, the young forester is able to invent a piece of forestry equipment which allows him to make enough money to fulfill his dream which is to own his own farm. In Lawson's *The Great Wheel*, an Irish immigrant has "the love of the land on him" but makes enough money to buy his farm
by working with the machinery of the first ferris wheel at the Chicago Exposition of 1893.

The Child on the Frontier

Another representation of the orientation toward the future in the novels is the focus on the activities of the child. The books suggest that children were allowed a great deal more freedom on the frontier than children would have had if they had lived in the city. This was particularly true of girls. For example, Sarah Noble is the only child in the family free to accompany her father into the wilderness. She is allowed to camp out and run free, and when her father returns home to get the family, she lives among the Indians where she experiences the freedom of soft moccasins and simple clothing rather than her stiff petticoats and crinolines. Caddie Woodlawn, in deference to her poor health as an infant, is allowed to run free as one of the boys on the frontier farm until she reaches the proper age to make a decision about becoming a lady. Even Laura Ingalls, because her father has only daughters, takes over the role of the son, helping with the harvesting and mowing of the hay while her sisters help their mother with the household chores. School and church are held less frequently than in cities, due to timing of crops, distance, farm tasks, and weather, and take on more of an aura of special occasions than daily necessities.

But, while these children enjoy their freedom, they also have a great deal of responsibility. They are expected to contribute toward the livelihood of the family, with progressively more
responsibility as they get older. They are also encouraged to get as much education as is possible. The value of education and the necessity of attending school, no matter how distant or primitive it may be is stressed. To Ma Ingalls, school is the final criterion for a good place for the family to live. In Crawford's *Hello the Boat*, the family moves to Cincinnati because they can have their farm but also be near good schools.

Aside from the tasks required of them on the farm, the children of the frontier novels have a wonderful time. Siblings are close, there are friendships with other children and sometimes with Indians. They enjoy the activities of the changing seasons from making snow angels and taking sleigh rides to bathing in the local creek and berry picking. The haystacks and outbuildings of the farms, as well as the surrounding wilderness, become the site of games and activities.

And in these novels, the fun sometimes has a particular object. The children of the frontier, as many American rustics before them, have a keen sense of humor about the airs and pretensions of the city. To emphasize these, some of the authors make use of the strain of frontier humor which is common in American literature. Washington Irving's sly pokes at the over-educated schoolmaster in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and Twain's poking fun at the Grangerford family in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, are echoed in these frontier children's efforts to deflate the pretenses of the "civilized."

Thus Caddie and her brothers put their priggish cousin on a bucking horse and cause her to ruin her fashionable dress in the hay mound.
And Laura Ingalls gets her revenge on Nelly Olsen when she leads her into the part of the creek she knows is full of leeches.

**The Frontier versus the City**

This making fun of the city is part of the convention of pastoral writing in which the life of the countryside is seen to be superior to the life of the city. The tests which the city children fail indicate that the pastoral vision of the superiority of life on the farm is alive.

For, by and large, these people reject the ugliness of city life. Laura Ingalls Wilder describes the town that is growing up near their homestead:

"The town was like a sore on the beautiful wild prairie. Old haystacks and manure piles were rotting around the stables, the backs of stores' false fronts were rough and ugly. The grass was worn now even from Second Street, and gritty dust blew between the buildings. The town smelled of staleness and dust and smoke and a fatty odor of cooking. A dank smell came from the saloons and a musty sourness from the ground by the back doors where the dishwater was thrown out."44

And Sayre describes her feelings on viewing their new homestead in *The New Land*:

"Not even the ugly crude little house could spoil this place, she thought, under a spreading sunset glow that spread its evanescent tints over all this great world of soft silver distances and touched even that encircling, protecting horizon of haze-hung mountains ... and wasn't this shack

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a lot better than that dark, dingy flat on West Van Buren in Chicago...?"45

The children in these novels recognize the beauty of their surroundings, and they enjoy them. They are very different from what Abrahams points out as typical children in a traditional farm-centered society. In traditional societies, children are raised simply to succeed their parents.46 In the novels of the frontier, the children represent the future. They are to be educated for that future, which may lie elsewhere than on the land.

Catherine Hall in _A Gathering of Days_, for example, leaves the small New Hampshire farm of her childhood at age thirteen to go to Exeter to help her aunt care for a new baby, but also to gain the chance to further her education. She sees her life as part of the linear pattern: "And that is what life's all about - changes every minute, and you never know when something begins where its going to take you."47

These children are going to have more and be better off than their parents. These frontier children live like their parents in a world between the civilization of the city and the wilderness of the wilderness. They have the best of both these worlds, for they are

46Abrahams, _op. cit._
47Blos, _op. cit._, p. 3.
allowed to experience some of the freedom of the frontier, and at the same time, to gain some of the advantages and the education necessary to deal with the life of the city. They see themselves as separate from the life of the city, but they are isolated from the life of the wilderness as well. While they can spend a part of their childhood running around like "wild Indians" as Caddie's mother calls it, there comes a time when the wild ways must be set aside. These frontier farmers see themselves as more connected, through their past, through technology, and through their own roots, to the life of the city than to the wilderness. They are attempting to control and tame a wilderness that they recognize is in many ways a mystery to them.

The Role of the Indian on the Frontier

This separation is most clearly revealed in the portrait of Indians in most of the books. While in most of the stories the Indians are seen as largely benign, that does not mean that they are understood. Often, if the Indians are savage in the sense of wanting to harm the settlers, it is because they have been bribed and duped by other white people into doing so, as the French have done in The Matchlock Gun. Most often the Indians are savage in the sense that they live in "uncivilized" ways, wearing the skins of animals and hunting rather than farming for their livelihood. The fears of white people are often, as in Caddie Woodlawn, perceived to be paranoia, and not reflecting any evil intent on the part of the Indians. When Caddie keeps Indian John's scalp belt
it is made clear that it contains Indian scalps only. In *The Courage of Sarah Noble* as well, the only threat to the pastoral existence is a war between the renegade Indians and their peaceful neighbors.

True to her role as the civilized being in the center of the strong family it is the mother who is most concerned about, afraid of and disgusted by the Indians:

"What Indian?" Ma asked him. She looked as if she were smelling the smell of an Indian whenever she said the word. Ma despised Indians. She was afraid of them too.48

Fathers and often children make their peace with Indians. Sarah Noble's father trusts his Indian neighbors to such an extent that he leaves his eight year old daughter with them when he goes to fetch his family. Mr. Woodlawn does not mind his daughter's friendship with Indian John, allowing her to keep John's dog and scalp belt when John travels, and protecting the local Indians when anxious white settlers want to kill them.

Rarely do the two cultures come into violent conflict in these novels of the frontier. Instead, the Indians frequently choose to move west ahead of the farmers rather than to confront them. It is as if they too understand the manifest destiny of the white man. Those Indians who choose to remain near the settlers are curiosities, for they are "tame" and yet they still carry their wildness with them.

They are still in touch with the very wilderness which the farmers are trying so desperately to fight. In Caddie Woodlawn, Caddie's father explains that John's tribe is moving away for better hunting because they are more in touch with the seasons and they know that winter will be hard in the Woodlawn's area. In The Long Winter, an Indian comes into the store to warn the townspeople of the hard winter to come. Pa Ingalls believes him because "They know some things that we don't."49

In most of these novels, it is the environment itself which is the enemy of the farmer. Whereas the Indians are in tune with the wilderness, the settlers are not and suffer enormous hardships because of it. The Ingalls family alone suffers from windstorms, prairie fires, blizzards, freezes, grasshoppers, cyclones, hail storms, and flocks of birds in the corn, with crop after crop destroyed by one or the other of these disasters. But the frontier settlers still believe that the way of the farmer is the right way. The youngest child in McNeely's The Jumping Off Place hates to see the beauty of the wild prairie destroyed by the furrows of the plow: "That's what plowing is - scalping the prairies." But her brother insists that it's better than Indians just running wild: "It proba'ly prefers being useful and raising corn to running wild with roses."50

49ibid.

Taming the Wilderness

The novels are filled with potent images of the wilderness which must be tamed. On the simplest level, there is Alice Dalgleish's *The Bears on Hemlock Mountain*, said to be based on a pioneer legend, in which a small farm boy is sent by his mother out from the safety of his own comfortable farm, over the wilderness of Hemlock Mountain to borrow a stew pot from his aunt on the other side. On his way home he meets a bear. To save himself, he hides underneath the large iron pot which becomes to him and to the reader a symbol of the protection and security of his home down below. Eventually he is rescued by the men of the farm who come into the wilderness on the mountain to search for him, shoot the bear, and bring the bear meat down to have for dinner. Thus is the wilderness tamed to the uses of the farmer.

On a more sophisticated level, Allan Eckert's *Incident at Hawk's Hill*, also based on a historic incident, lays out the choice between the life of the farmer and the wilderness. The MacDonald family are settled on a successful farm on the Canadian plains in 1870. The farm prospers. But the MacDonalnds have a half-wild son who chatters with the animals instead of with his family, and one day wanders away onto the vast prairie that lies outside their settled fields. There he is lost until adopted by a female badger who cares for him and feeds and trains him as if he were one of her recently lost young. Eventually the young wild child is found, and makes his choice for civilization. The badger is brought to live on the farm. The
wilderness does not conquer, but is instead conquered and tamed. The book becomes an allegory for the image of the west. Eckert makes it clear that this taming process is not a mild one. The wilderness must be violently suppressed in order that it not come back. The killing of the badger’s young and her mate, and the eventual accidental shooting of the badger herself, are echoes of all the bears who have died in the epic of bringing the wilderness into submission to the life of the farmer.

Loving the Land

One of the strongest aspects of the idea of pastoralism is the notion that people become attached to land. And yet many critics have decried this as only myth, saying that in actuality, the American frontier experience is one in which the average farmer ruthlessly misused the land and then moved on. Hofstadter says that in a profound sense the United States failed to develop the agrarian culture that it desired in its myths, if by that we mean that life's happiness comes from an "emotional and craftsmanlike dedication on the soil." He says that this is a tradition-directed outlook, that exists in farming cultures where one plot of land is in the hands of one family for generations. This is not the case with most American farms on the frontier. The American experience differed from this in being mobile, speculative, mechanized, and commercial

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51 Hofstadter, op. cit., p. 46.
rather than traditional. D.H. Lawrence criticizes Americans for idealizing the land, but not loving it: "Americans have never loved the soil of America as Europeans have loved the soil of Europe. America has never been a blood-home-land. Only an ideal home-land. The home-land of the idea, of the spirit. And of the pocket, not of the blood."\(52\) In other places the land has shaped the people who have lived upon it; in America the Americans have shaped the land.

Whether the love of land is truth or legend, in the novels for children about the frontier farming experience, the farmer's love of the land is there in good measure. Allan Eckert describes it in the prologue to \textit{Incident at Hawk's Hill}: "... and just as they took onto themselves the land so too the land took them and they became part of it, growing to love it with the fierce intensity that is the hallmark of the pioneer settler."\(53\)

Many of the books create this vision of the love of the land, through actual explanation, or through long passages of description which evoke the peace that the beauty of a place brings to those who live upon it:

"He was standing near the creek-bed, against a background of leafless wild plum branches. His flannel shirt was open at the throat, and the wind was blowing his hair. There were smile wrinkles

\(52\)Lawrence, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 111.

around his eyes, but he was not smiling. He was looking away across the sea of grass with an expression on his face that was intense, tender, and almost rapt. It was as though someone he loved had called to him and he had lifted his head to reply.  

These people love the land because they are not just pioneers, they are both pioneers and settlers. They are carving homes for themselves out of the wilderness. The land is important to them. They are themselves idealists, going off into the frontier expecting milk and honey and mild climate. When they do not find it, they struggle fiercely anyway. Their land becomes important to them because they have worked so hard for it and suffered to make it yield. Of all the frontier families, only Pa Ingalls moves his family more than once and he remains planted when his children are old enough to go to school. The settlers are there to put down roots, whether conditions are harsh or not.

Wendell Berry points out that established farm populations plant trees whereas mobile populations plant annual cycle crops. Trees brought to the new homestead and planted become symbolic of a family's intention to put down its own roots. In Caudill's *Tree of Freedom*, Stephanie brings an apple seed from the Carolinas to Kentucky to plant, just as her grandmother had brought them from France to the New World. The Ingalls family plants trees around their homestead shanty almost before they do anything else, one for

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54McNeely, op. cit., p. 307.
each member of the family, to bring shade and shelter to the barren prairie. Laura does this as well when she marries and moves to her own homestead.

The pattern of the books is Turner's pattern of the west. Each family settles and towns begin to grow and then a new generation grows up and moves the process forward. The most typical endings for these stories is the settling down of the now-grown child character with a family of his or her own on a new farm, to begin again the process of taming the land. So Laura Ingalls marries Almanzo Wilder and drives off to her own homestead. So Jim Keath in Moccasin Trail settles on the farm in the west. So the young Irishman in The Great Wheel, settles with his new bride on his new dairy farm in Wisconsin. Thus is created a new cycle of young families peopling the new farms of the west.

The Frontier Pastoral

Leo Marx has said that American writers seldom have designed satisfactory resolutions to their pastoral fables.55 But these novelists of the frontier have managed satisfying solutions by using both the concept of circular time and that of linear time. As Turner said, the process of the frontier was always re-creating itself as America moved west. And the novels take advantage of this process, ending with the beginning of a new cycle.

R.W.B. Lewis points out that this kind of circular pattern exists in Cooper's novels. The earliest novels are about the aging Natty Bumppo, while the later ones take us farther and farther into the wilderness of his youth. It is as if there is a constant re-birth of the wilderness beyond us. For the novelists of the frontier, there is a constant re-birth of pioneer-settlers to move on to tame it.

There is a kind of irony in this continuing agrarian vision in the twentieth century. In the 1870's when Laura Ingalls Wilder was growing up, over fifty percent of the population worked on small farms. By the late thirties and early forties, when she wrote about the end of an era, only slightly over 15% worked on farms. By the time Incident at Hawk's Hill was published in 1971, only 3% of the population were farmers. This shrinking statistic helps to explain the pastoral nostalgia for this period when half the population earned their living on the land, and for the ending of an era of expansion across the continent.

Raymond Williams suggests in The Country and the City that every writer of the country experience has a problem with perspective. Each writer looks back to the happier time of his or her childhood, and perceives that to be the time of greatest change, the end of an

56 Lewis, op. cit., p. 103.

era that has taken place in his or her lifetime. In truth, from the
beginning, the American frontier experience was a constant series
of endings and new beginnings as the frontier moved across the
continent. Because, as Hofstadter says, the United States was born
in the country and moved to the city, each of these authors carries
pastoral notions of his or her childhood in particular or of the
national childhood, constantly moving on, constantly beginning again,
as somehow richer and better than the present.

Certainly, with the western frontier declared gone by the late
nineteenth century, many of these writers about the frontier experi­
ence were perceiving a truth. The small farmer would never again have
the kind of actual existence that was so common up until the twentieth
century. But these novels of the frontier aren't really telling the
story of actual existence, with its hard work, monotony, and day-to-
day existence. Because of the strength of this pastoral nostalgia,
and of the agrarian vision, which sees life on that small frontier
town as healthier, happier, and somehow sturdier than contemporary
existence, the pastoral lives on in the frontier novels for children,
explaining, interpreting, and justifying for modern children the
values, practices, and joys of rural farm life, as well as the virtues
of hard work, endurance and courage that were especially required of
those frontier farmers.

Kosa Moore has summarized Laura Ingalls Wilder's work, and
incidentally that of all of these writers about the frontier when she
says that the "...creation is art - life not as it was lived, but as every reader dreams in his heart that it should be."^58

^58Rosa Moore "Laura Ingalls Wilder and Rose Wilder Lane...", *op. cit.*, p. 108.
CHAPTER III

THE WILDERNESS PASTORAL

Background: The Wilderness Experience

When one examines the novels for children that concern the frontier experience and the taming of the west, a particular image of the wilderness emerges. That wilderness, like its biblical counterpart, was a wild and savage place which had to be controlled by the settler and the plough in order for civilized society to grow. The word for wilderness in old English probably meant "the place of wild beasts." Nash speculates that the root "wil" is from the Teutonic word for "self-willed," "willful" or "uncontrollable."¹ The place of these wild beasts with uncontrollable powers was in the center of dark forested regions. These were places where humans entered at their own peril.

In the Biblical tradition, the wilderness was desert rather than forest, but it was also considered to be a cursed land, dangerous and threatening to those who entered it. The wilderness was contrasted to the richness of the garden, where humans were provided for by God's bounty.

From this Judeo-Christian tradition arises still another meaning for the word "wilderness", one which was to play an important role in the American experience. For, although Moses and his people suffered forty years of exile in the harsh wilderness, they also were renewed and given new wisdom during the experience. Their journey into the wilderness provided them with the gifts that would be needed to sustain them in the future. The "exodus" tradition, in which people went into the wilderness to obtain freedom and to sustain and enrich their faith continues in the New Testament. Elijah spent forty days in the wilderness seeking inspiration from God. Isaiah mentioned the prophet crying in the wilderness, and later New Testament authors wrote that St. John the Baptist who went into the wilderness to baptize the heathen, was that voice. Jesus himself spent forty days in the wilderness, where he was tempted by the Devil. And the ascetic Essenes retired to the wilderness to meditate and write the truths of their beliefs. In all of these cases, the wilderness itself retained the sense of forboding and danger, but it was also recognized as a place to which people might retire to re-new themselves and their faith.

The European settlers of the American coast felt themselves to be following this tradition as they came into the wilderness of the new continent, prepared to worship the Lord and to create a new society. For these settlers, the American wilderness represented both a place of retreat from religious pressures and a chance for renewal of faith as well as a crucible in which they could mold a
new society based on faith. From this harsh and savage place, a new society would arise, "as a city that is set upon a hill," a beacon for all to see.

This vision of the wilderness as a place where one can be closer to some sort of basic truth about life has remained an integral part of our vision of the wilderness, and grows perhaps stronger in this country as the size of the wilderness diminishes.

Those first pioneers who moved across the continent, who felled the trees and killed the wild beasts; and confronted the dangers of a harsh existence, continued to nurture the image of the wilderness as a foe to all that was civilized. But just behind these pioneers, and armed with the Biblical image of the wilderness as a retreat, were the writers and poets of a more genteel society who were drawn to the mystique of the wilderness.

Romanticism was flowering in Europe in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as this country was being settled, and this Romantic movement had a great influence on the thought of American writers. Roderick Nash has said that Romanticism defies definition but, in general, it implies an enthusiasm for the strange, the remote, the solitary, and the mysterious. These very qualities seemed to be captured in the vast expanses of forest and desert which lay just outside of American settled towns and cities.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{2}}\text{ibid.}, \text{p. 47.}\]
Soon American writers and poets were beginning to fall victim to the romance of the wilderness as they wrote and travelled in the country. William Bird, II, a member of the Virginia gentry, visited the back country in the early eighteenth century, and extolled the virtues of sleeping out amidst the wildness of nature and the purity of life in the woods. He was not above commenting on the deplorable state of people who actually lived in these areas but he romantically separated his ideas of the wilderness as scenery and a place for contemplation, from those of the pioneers who fought it.³

In 1781, Philip Freneau published essays under the title "The Philosopher of the Forest" in which a hermit voiced Freneau's comments on civilized society. Freneau was well within the pastoral tradition. As in the pastorals of Virgil and Theocritus or the later works of English romantics, the rustic, in America often a hermit or an Indian, commented disparagingly on the life of the city and civilized man from the safety of the wilderness. These kinds of writings, with the outsider writing about the wilderness and contrasting it to the life of the city, were echoed in the writings of the Transcendentalists, and particularly in the work of Henry David Thoreau.

Thoreau in Walden best expressed what came to be an American pastime of retreat to the wilderness to meditate and contemplate life in civilization. In his early works he praised the life of the wilderness but he was not totally at home in it. His sojourn at Walden in the countryside outside of Concord, was no more than a brief walk from town. He visited his family, heard the whistle of passing trains, and procured needed supplies from town. Nash has said that Thoreau's visit to the wilderness of Maine shocked him, being "savage and dreary" when compared to the countryside around Concord. Thoreau wrote of man in this setting: "vast, titanic, inhuman Nature has got him at a disadvantage, caught him alone, and pilfers him of some divine faculty.” After his trips to the Maine woods, Thoreau moderated his ideas about the wilderness. Some of his best known words, "In wildness is the preservation of mankind" represent this moderated philosophy. Thoreau felt, like all pastoralists, not that humans should go and stay in the wilderness, but that, like the mystics of old, they should retire to the wilderness to gain perspective on their lives in the cities. Much that made life pleasant was lacking in the fierce wild setting. But people became jaded and helpless unless they experienced the power of the wild as well as life of society. There must be a balance between the vitality and raw courage needed to survive in the wilderness setting.

\[^{4}\text{Nash, op. cit., p. 91.}\]
and the delicacy and intellectual and moral aspects of life in civilized society.

In the United States there has always been a double image of the wilderness. On the one hand it is a savage and wild place that has to be tamed to the morals and values of civilization. On the other is this same wilderness, still threatening, still harsh and indifferent, but nonetheless, providing a thoughtful retreat for those who are weary of the savageries of civilization.

Eight of the Newbery winners and honor medal books are concerned with the American wilderness. All are pastoral in their approach. The novels are not concerned with a life of solitary contemplation of the beauty of the wilds. They are, rather, commenting on society and civilization, using the device of a stay in the wilderness. They all contrast the wilderness condition and life close to nature in the wild, usually a solitary life, with the life of society. The novels can be called "wilderness" pastorals. Pastoralism defined most simply is a nostalgic longing for a simpler life in which a person is more in harmony with nature. But as Peter Marinelli has pointed out, it is also a particular kind of yearning.⁵ Pastoralism is the acknowledgement by the person of the city that man is out of touch with the natural world. The natural world provides a place of simplicity and harmony in contrast to the

life and chaos of the city. The wilderness pastoral respects that
time of contemplation in this simpler world, but also acknowledges
that nature can be remote and unfeeling, and that, in the end, the
pilgrim must choose the life of the city. As Lynen expresses it:
"Man can never find a home in nature nor can he live outside of
it."  

**Contemplative Life in the Wilderness**

Perhaps the clearest representation of the contemplative
aspect of life in the wilderness is William Steig's *Abel's Island*. 
In this fantasy Abelard, a mouse of rather foppish ways, manfully
decides to rescue his beloved Amanda's scarf after it blows away in
a tearing rainstorm while they are enjoying a sybaritic picnic in
the country. Abel is swept downstream in a torrent and becomes
marooned, like Robinson Crusoe, on an island where he must survive
alone for almost a year. Anita Moss has pointed out that the novel
is clearly pastoral, most notably in its form which revolves, as
do the shepherds' idylls, around the seasons of the year. As
Additionally, the island provides an abundant natural bounty, from which
even the over-civilized Abel makes, with some struggle, a comfortable
living, with ample food, materials for clothing and warmth and shelter.

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6 John Lynen, *The Pastoral Art of Robert Frost* (New Haven,

7 Anita Moss, "The Spear and the Piccolo: Heroic and Pastoral
Dimensions of William Steig's Dominic and Abel's Island" *Children's
Literature*, Vol. 10 (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press,
1982), pp. 124-140.
Abel is very much the pastoral contemplative philosopher. At times he is totally at peace in his refuge, philosophical about life in the wilds, proud of his ability to survive, and feeling at one with the wilderness world:

Rain caused one to reflect on the shadowed, more poignant parts of life - the inescapable sorrows, the speechless longings, the disappointments, the regrets, the cold miseries. It also allowed one the leisure to ponder questions unasked in the bustle of brighter days; and if one were snug under a sound roof, as Abel was, one felt somehow mothered, though mothers were nowhere around, and absolved of responsibilities.  

... he had his birch, and his star, and the conviction grew in him that the earth and the sky knew he was there and also felt friendly; so he was not really alone and not really entirely lonely. At times he'd be overcome by sudden ecstasy and prance about on high rocks, or skip along on the limbs of trees, shouting meaningless syllables...  

Living in the heart of nature, he began to realize how much was going on in the seeming stillness. Plants grew and bore fruit, branches proliferated, buds became flowers, clouds formed in ever-new ways and patterns, colors changed.  

And certainly part of what William Steig hopes to convey about Abel, the civilized man-mouse, is that he can survive in the world of the wilderness, that he is nurtured, grows in confidence, selflessness, and maturity. It is not coincidental that Abel is so-named. When he leaves his island, he is able, able to survive, and also able to

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9Ibid., p. 53.  
10Ibid., p. 54.
choose to leave his wilderness retreat and return to the city a better person.

But it is the city to which Abel truly and always belongs. He never lets go of it. It is the city which provides the stuff of most of his contemplation:

Was he being singled out for some reason; was he being tested? If so, why? Didn't it prove his worth that such a one as Amanda loved him? Did it? Why did Amanda love him? He wasn't all that handsome, was he? And he had no particular accomplishments. What sort of mouse was he? Wasn't he really a nob and a fop, and frivolous on serious occasions...11

He waited, and to keep himself amused, he hummed snatches of his favorite cantata and imagined how he would narrate his adventures. He would be quite matter-of-fact, especially about the parts where he had shown courage and endurance; he would leave the staring and gasping to his audience.12

The three things which most sustain Abel on his island are his memories of his life in society with Amanda, and two treasures which he finds on the island: a large book and a pocket watch abandoned there by some larger earlier island visitor. The book he reads daily, savoring his contact with the printed page. But it is the watch which he treasures most. Perhaps it is the clearest symbol of society, of a kind of time-keeping so foreign to the seasons and ways of nature:

He was curious to know if the watch would run. Some prodding and shoving with a pole in the

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11 Ibid., p. 34.
12 Ibid., p. 17.
grooves of the stem-winder made it turn around a dozen times. The watch began to tick. The sounds he had become accustomed to, the roaring and gurgling of the river, the wailing and whining of the wind, the pattering and dripping of rain, the chirruping of birds and the chirring of insects, had natural, irregular rhythms, which were very soothing, but the steady mechanical tempo of the watch gave him something he had been wanting in this wild place. It and the book helped him to feel connected to the civilized world he'd come from. He had no use for the time the watch could tell, but he needed the ticking.\footnote{ibid., p. 60.}

Steig uses an interesting pair of images to show the reader the lessons which Abel learns in the wilderness. When Abel is living in the wilderness, his greatest enemy is an owl. Abel survives the first attack of this wilderness threat because in a way he is too civilized not to. Abel's fear and rage at being attacked cause him to defend himself and to yell wild insults and threats, taunting the owl, rather than give in to his fate. The enemy, the wilderness, retreats: "His fury so upset and bewildered the owl that it flew upward and roosted on a dead limb of the tree, staring down in disbelief."\footnote{ibid., p. 71.} The owl recovers and dives, only to find Abel continuing to fight and yell and run in circles, in a most uncharacteristically mouselike way: "This mad carrousel so offended the owl's ancient ancient sense of decorum that it grew confused and crashed into the tree. It had to go off somewhere to sit in a huff, unruffle its
feathers, and regain its ruthless composure."¹⁵ By going against the ways of nature, by being unmouselike, Abel is able to survive the wilderness threat.

Later in the story as Abel is returning to society, he encounters the owl's more "civilized" counterpart, a cat. This time Abel, wise in the ways of the woods, knows that his escape lies in being what is expected of him: "Looking down from the safety of his position, Abel realized that the cat had to do what she did. She was being a cat. It was up to him to be the mouse."¹⁶ And, by being true to his wilder more natural self, he is able to escape the perils of civilized society, in the form of the cat. Thoreau said, "From the forest and wilderness come the tonics and barks which brace mankind."¹⁷ This is true for Abel as well. The retreat to the wilderness, though forced upon him, has made a man out of Abel. Through his knowledge of civilization, he is able to make his home in the wilderness, from which he contemplates his past and his future, the ways of civilization and the ways of nature. When the time comes to return to society, the wisdom of the woods is his as well, and he is made stronger for the trials of society as a result of his stay in the wilds.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 112.

The Gifts of the Wilderness

This kind of philosophical contemplation of the meaning of life in the wilderness and society is a common thread through many of these novels. Like Thoreau, the protagonists perceive their time in the wilderness as one in which they reflect upon their lives and add experiences which enrich their lives in society.

In Rutherford Montgomery's Kildee House, Jerome Kildee, a tombstone carver, builds a house against a redwood tree in the middle of the California forest. Kildee does this because "This was the land of silence, the place for the silent man." Although he had been a monument builder before, Kildee comes to the woods to be a "philosopher." He wants to think and sit and be close to the beauty of nature. Like Thoreau, Kildee chooses a place not too far from town so that supplies can be brought to him. But he lives without electricity, motor transport, telephone or any other of the distractions of "civilization." His house is soon overrun with the creatures of the forest, with skunks living under the floor and in the fireplace, and racoons in the stove. Kildee allows them all to live in the house with him, accommodating himself to their ways. In this tranquil setting, rather than carve gravestones, he begins to carve monuments to life. But, the inevitable clash with civilization arises in a confrontation with a young hunter and his dog.

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Through this confrontation, Kildee is befriended first by the children of the forest area, and then by their families. In the end, he remains in his wilderness home, but he becomes a member of the community of people who live in the forest, and realizes the joys of companionship with other human beings. He finds that he isn't "a silent man." The wilderness has brought a richness into his life that he had not felt in the city.

In two other books, the bounty of the wilderness allows the protagonist to bring back some of the richness to the lives of the people of the city. It is interesting that both of these books are written as fantasies. The Secret River was Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' only children's story and was found among her papers only after she died. Like The Yearling, it is set in the rich wilderness of the Florida Everglades. In this brief dreamy fantasy, the young protagonist, Calpurnia, hears that there is a secret river deep in the forest of the Everglades which overflows with its bounty of fish. Her father is a poor fishseller in a poor town who has no fish to sell. Calpurnia decides to risk the dangers of the forest in order to bring back its bounty. She finds the river, catches as many fish as she can manage to carry and begins her return to civilization. Night falls as she begins to leave, and she must confront the creatures of the wild before she can return to society. She offers part of the bounty to each of the wild creatures who are appeased and let her continue on her way. She gives an owl, as in Abel's Island, a symbol of the wild, one fish. She gives a bear, an archetypical American symbol of the wilderness, two, and a panther three
fish. Even after having shared with the wild creatures, Calpurnia has more than enough to bring home. There is enough for all of the townfolk. This bounty from the wilderness is what is needed to help her village to get back on its feet again. The people take the fish as loans from her father, eat them, and regain their strength. Feeling strong again, they are able to go out and find work. They earn money for the work with which they re-pay Calpurnia's father for the fish. The simple abundance of the wilderness has restored a town to life.

In Jane Langton's The Fledgling, the wilderness again offers a boon to the civilized world. Langton makes it clear that this fantasy novel is directly within the tradition of Henry David Thoreau. Georgia, the eight year old heroine who wants to fly, is the step-daughter of the owner and director of the Concord College of Transcendental Knowledge, set very close to Walden Pond. Thoreau's statue resides on the hall stairpost, and Uncle Freddy, Georgie's step-father, talks so frequently with and about "Henry" that he is almost a living member of the family.

Langton writes in the pastoral tradition that intimates that children can have the same kind of wisdom about nature as do the rustic shepherds, hermits, or the noble savages and which is lost to civilized adults. Georgie is an unconsciously wise child, close to the ways of nature. In this Langton echoes Thoreau, quoting him in her frontpiece: "In youth, before I lost any of my senses, I can remember that I was all alive... This earth was the most
glorious musical instrument, and I was audience to its strains...
The morning and the evening were sweet to me, and I led a life aloof from the society of men."19

In The Fledgling, an old goose flying down from the summer breeding grounds on the Hudson Bay stops at Walden Pond with others of his kind and discovers a boon. And he knows: "He must give the present to someone. Not just anybody. Oh no! It was too good for just anybody. He must give it to someone who would understand how precious it was. Someone who would take good care of it."20

He decides upon Georgie as the suitable receiver of his gift. Georgie's Uncle Freddy, while not entirely believing Georgie is actually learning to fly, cannot give up his faith in the ideas of Thoreau. He says to his wife:

"Well, perhaps the birds will teach her how to fly."
"After all, my dear, you know what Henry said. The birds, he said, bore messages that were important to his life. 'The sparrow cheeps to the great design of the universe.' That's what he said. The only reason we don't understand their language, he said, is because we are not one with nature."21

Because Georgie is a child still in touch with nature herself, she is able to accept the goose's gift of oneness with nature. The

20 Ibid., p. 2.
21 Ibid., p. 16.
arch-villains of the book are two city-dwellers who perceive nature and the wilderness as a threat. One is Georgie's neighbor, Miss Madeline Prawn, secretary to the town banker, and living a life of meticulously imposed order. She believes that nature is untidy, so she plants rows of plastic blooms in her garden. The other is the banker himself, Mr. Ralph Alonzo Preek, who has some contempt for the College of Transcendental Knowledge as it doesn't make any money. He is not a bad man but is so out of touch with nature that when the goose comes down to Georgie one early dawn, he assumes that it is trying to attack her. He spends the rest of the book self-righteously trying to kill it.

But the clear sight of childhood, the true vision of an ecologically balanced world, and the gift of the wilderness triumph over the nonsense of the city. The gift is a golden globe:

"Oh," breathed Georgie. "It's the world. It's the whole world."

It was true. The gift from the Goose Prince was an image of the earth itself, shining and turning in the stupendous immensity of the coat closet under the stairs in the front hall of the big house at no. 40 Walden Street in Concord, Massachusetts. "Take good care of it," the Goose Prince had said. "Oh, yes," whispered Georgia, renewing her promise with all her heart. "I will. Oh, yes I will."22

And so the pastoral child returns to society with the gift of the wilderness; the understanding that the world is one and that her job, as is that of each person, is to work to keep it together.

22Ibid., p. 182.
The Solitary Hero

The quality that is necessary to the successful acceptance of the gifts of the wilderness experience is solitude. Whether it is for just a short time, as Georgie spent on Walden Pond, or Calpurnia spent in the everglades, or for a longer period, as was true for Abel and for Jerome Kildee, what is crucial to the philosophical experience of the wilderness is this time spent alone.

This is the opposite of the emphasis on family life that one finds in the novels set on the frontier. The basic attitude in these two kinds of novels is very different. Solitude is lacking in the novels of the frontier because it is unproductive. One person alone is unable to fight and clear the wilderness, or prepare and plant the garden that is the necessary beginning to the new agrarian society. In each of the frontier novels the family grows and puts down roots, its members working to bring about the change in the land. The frontiersman, the loner, whether it be Natty Bumppo, or Jim Keath in *Moccasin Trail*, is not fighting the wilderness, but living in it, becoming one with it. In the eyes of civilized men, the men of the cities behind the frontier, this loner was actually becoming wild and savage himself, unable to fight alone against the tremendous force of nature.

But those frontier farm families were causing a change in the wilderness. They were indeed taming it, felling its trees and settling its lands to such an extent that the fear grew, as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, that the wilderness
would be lost. John James Audubon, perhaps the most knowledgeable man of his time about the life of the forest, was already writing in 1818 that he was seeing the woods fast disappearing under the axe: "The greedy mills told the sad tale, that in a century the noble forests ... should exist no more."23

The romantic writers carried this theme into the works of fiction. Cooper's stories of the west told not only a romantic tale of the wild loner but that the wilderness and men such as Natty Bumppo were soon to be no more.

Because it played such a major role in the settlement of the nation, the loss of the wilderness as the major enemy against which the pioneers struggled presented a problem for American writers. If, as Turner had declared, the frontier, that boundary between all that is wild and untamed, and the life of civilization, is where the riches of growth and activity of American life have always been, then, as the wilderness disappears, the very cutting edge of American society is eliminated.

As a result, in the twentieth century the agrarian model presented by Tuan, in which the sacred rural, agricultural landscape lies mid-way between the profane life of the city and the profane wilderness, began to be modified. That wilderness which had been profane, an enemy bitterly to be defeated, now became a diminishing

quantity, a threatened place which had once uniquely defined the American experience.

Ironically, only when the wilderness had been subdued did the person lost and isolated in the confusion of city life begin to look upon the solitude of life in the wilderness as something to be treasured. By 1890, much of the land of the nation was settled, with the focus of life definitely shifting from the country to the city. No longer did the pioneers have to fight directly against the forest, and the native peoples for a place on the land. The children and grandchildren of the very pioneers who sacrificed all, who gave up friends and the society of towns and suffered hardships to tame the land, began to see this very hardship and solitude as an attractive alternative to life in the city.

Contemporary Survival Novels

While the solitary hero does not exist in the novels for children which talk of role of the families of yeoman farmers in building a new nation and taming the wilderness, increasingly in the contemporary novels the solitary hero who spends time alone in the wilderness begins to emerge as a common protagonist. Certainly, if one looks back over the titles which have won or been honored by the Newbery award over the past sixty years, the greatest number of these "survival stories" as Binnie Tate Wilkin has called them, in which a lone young person must encounter the wilderness on his or
her own, have appeared within the last twenty years.24 In a number of these novels, the young person actually chooses to spend time in the wilderness, deliberately selecting a time of solitude to contemplate or test himself or herself alone. One of the first of these, Armstrong Sperry's *Call It Courage*, won the Newbery Medal in 1941. While set in the South Pacific, and thus, outside of the scope of this paper, the novel embraces this sense of testing one's maturity and the real growth which can take place when a young person confronts the wilderness alone. The young protagonist, Mafatu, in order to conquer his fear of the sea, sails out alone and is shipwrecked on an island, where he must learn to survive from the riches of the land, and to escape the attacks of cannibals. Through his experiences on the island, Mafatu comes to understand better who he is and what is important to him.

Another solitary hero is Karana, the young Indian girl who chooses to remain in the wilderness in Scott O'Dell's *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, a story based on the legend of the "Lost Woman of San Nicholas." Karana and her people are going away from the small island off of the coast of southern California where they have always lived because the violent Aleuts have raided them and killed many members of their tribe. But Karana's brother is accidentally left

behind when the boats leave. Because the boats cannot turn back to pick him up, Karana chooses to remain with him, throwing herself into the sea and swimming to shore. Her brother is killed soon after by wild dogs, and Karana finds herself alone on the island which was once the home of her people. While it is not entirely an unused wilderness, it is a wild and lonely place. As well, Karana chooses to abandon the old ways of her people. She destroys the trinkets left by the raiders who had betrayed her people. She sets fire to the old village because it seems haunted by memories of the past, and lives instead in a makeshift shelter. She must survive threats from hostile Aleuts, hiding when they come to hunt on the island, protect herself from the pack of bloodthirsty dogs, once tame but gone wild as the village declined, and learn to survive using skills she had seen but has never tried herself. She spends eighteen years alone on the island, except for the dogs she tames, the birds, and otters whom she befriends, and a silent friendship with a young Aleut girl who comes with the hunters but does not betray her.

Karana is able to make a living for herself off the riches of the life of the island, without having to kill the mammals hunted by her tribe and by the Aleuts, which had been the cause of the wars between them. O'Dell seems to say that a higher morality can be learned from this kind of life of lonely contemplation of nature. He said of Karana in his Newbery Acceptance speech, "In her brief
lifetime, Karana made the change from that world where everything lived only to be exploited, to a new and more meaningful world."²⁵

But, in the end, the solitary ways of her life on the island are too much for Karana. She befriends the Aleut girl, even though it might mean betrayal and death. And when at last a boat comes for her years later, she is eager to leave and to find her people again:

"I came to the mound where my ancestors had sometimes camped in the summer. I thought of them and of the happy times spent in my house on the headland, of my canoe lying unfinished beside the trail. I thought of many things, but stronger was the wish to be where people lived, to hear their voices and their laughter."²⁶

All of these young people who go into the wilderness are able to survive. The land provides bounteously for their needs for food. The threats which exist—cold, storms, wild animals—are all overcome through courage and resourcefulness. This is not the easy pastoral of the shepherds piping and singing, where the land and its riches easily sustain one. The wilderness in these books is a hostile and difficult place but, when one learns to live with it, as Karana tames the wild dogs, as Abel finds his log and settles in, as Calpurnia appeases the wild creatures, it is possible to survive.


What makes these protagonists so distinctly pastoral is not their easy existence, but the fact that they are all contemplatives. They are, while they explore food sources and search for warmth, contrasting the life they live in the wild with the life they knew before they came to be here. They find their lives satisfying in some ways, but they also find their lives lacking. The major lack is that of company. The sense of isolation is intense in each of these books, and the yearning for company is inherent in all of them. Abel befriends an absent-minded frog and daydreams endlessly of his beloved Amanda and their life together. He creates figures out of clay which represent all the members of his family so that he will have them near him. He dreams of the day he will return to people. Karana befriends the animals she would formerly have killed or eaten, and does the unthinkable when she befriends a young girl of the enemy tribe in her intense loneliness.

Isolation, Loneliness and Return

Isolation is heightened in Abel's Island, Island of the Blue Dolphins, and Call it Courage by the setting. It is perhaps not surprising that the sense of isolation is created in many of these novels by the enforced solitary stay on the isolated shores of an island, particularly since most have been written in a time when little other wilderness exists. Each "person" is physically isolated by water from all contact with others - physically as well as emotionally cut off from them. Islands have a symbolic significance as isolating places, appearing frequently particularly in
stories with survival themes, such as DeFoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, in Wyss' *The Swiss Family Robinson*, in Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and even some play activities in Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. The island setting is used to create this isolated feeling in a number of Newbery winners and honor books, including Mabel Robinson's *Bright Island*, Julia Sauer's *Light at Tern Rock*, Madeleine L'Engle's *A Ring of Endless Light* and Katherine Paterson's *Jacob Have I Loved*.

The loneliness of the wilderness setting is expressed as a longing for a family and company in these wilderness pastorals. Once, again, the American hero tradition of the loner is denied. Just as in the novels for children about the frontier experience, where even young people who started out on their own became attached to families, so the focus of these wilderness pastorals is on the unhappiness of a long-term solitary existence with nature, and the desire to be reunited with family and loved ones as a primary motive for the choice for civilization.

This is not to say that these protagonists learn nothing from their stay in the wilderness. Because they are contemplative heroes, they emerge, as did Thoreau, enriched by the experience of being, at least for a time, at one with nature in the wild. But because they are pastoral heroes, they always do return.

Sometimes the loneliness is less explicit. In Jean George's *My Side of the Mountain*, Sam Gribley sets out deliberately to try surviving alone in the wilderness.
He returns to his great-grandfather's long-abandoned farm in the Catskills, now wilderness again, to see if he can survive on his own. The book is similar in arrangement to Thoreau's *Walden*, with successive chapters dealing with Sam's discoveries about the wilderness, from the time he leaves the city to enter it, until he feels at home. Sam has prepared for his wilderness experience for some time. In the city, he has read everything he can find about wilderness survival and about the area to which he is going.

This young man is different from the other protagonists. He feels at home in the wilderness. He is befriended by the wild animals, but has no compunction about hunting and trapping animals for food. He steals the deer shot by hunters and uses them to make clothing as well as for his food. There are no lectures to the reader about the negative aspects of killing. Instead, Sam's story is a matter-of-fact wilderness diary, complete with diagrams and instructions about how to make snares, find wild foods, and so on.

Sam is at home in the wild, and he is not so avowedly lonely as the other protagonists:

"I did not become lonely. Many times during the summer I had thought of the 'long winter months ahead' with some fear. I had read so much about the loneliness of the farmer, the trapper, the woodsman during the bleakness of winter that I had come to believe it."

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and later, a young man who comes to visit him asks:

"Don't you get lonely?"
"Lonely? I've hardly had a quiet moment since arriving. Stop being a reporter and let's eat. Besides, there are people in the city who are lonelier than I."

In fact, Sam praises the entire wilderness preservation movement, sounding like an echo of the Boy Scouting philosophy: "Then let us serenade the conservationists who have protected the American wilderness, so that a boy can still be alone in this world of millions of people."

But, in spite of his enthusiasm for the wild and his professed lack of loneliness, the hero is still a pastoral protagonist. His retreat from the bustle of city life is not complete. His wilderness is close enough to town that a strawberry picker finds him as she searches for berries, he can visit the library several times, and a young boy from town comes to visit. He is also visited by his father several times to make sure he is all right, and by a wilderness philosopher, a college English teacher who calls him "Thoreau." In fact, he is allowed the freedom to live in the wilderness for a while, but with the advantages of civilization near enough that he truly doesn't need to worry about suffering or feeling lonely.

\[28^\text{ibid.}, \text{p. 155.}\]
\[29^\text{ibid.}, \text{p. 116.}\]
And, unlike Natty Bumppo, he does not go farther into the wilderness as civilization encroaches. In the end, like the early pioneers, his family follows him to the old farm homestead, and decides to move there and farm again. His mother says to his father, "Well, if he doesn't want to come home, then we will bring home to him."30

Sam's retreat to the wilderness points up to his city-bred family that that lifestyle is not what they really want. They come to the wilderness as well, but not to live in it as Sam has done, but, like the pioneers, to tame it, to farm again the old abandoned farmland. Sam's mother echoes all the frontier farmers when she says: "I am a Stuart, and the Stuarts loved the land." then "She looked at the mountain and the meadow and the gorge, and I felt her feet squeeze into the earth and take root."31

Jon C. Stott, in "Jean George's Arctic Pastoral" clearly delineates between pastoral and romantic literature.32 He maintains that if the characters choose to live forever in Arcadia, in the wilderness, and can live there successfully, then the novel is a romance. If the characters, while realizing the life-giving forces of the wilderness, still choose the "city" or society, the novel is pastoral. By this definition all of these books are pastoral novels.

30 ibid., p. 164.
31 ibid., p. 165.
Most characters return to the life of society rather than remain in the wilderness. In two of the novels, the characters do not stay in an unchanged wilderness, but, instead, like the pioneer family of the frontier, remain but carve a new middle landscape out of the wilds.

So Sam Gribley's family moves into the wilderness to rebuild a farm, and so Jerome Kildee comes to accept the good company and society of his neighbors in what was once his private retreat.

The Indian in the Wilderness

Indian Captive by Lois Lenski is the one wilderness novel which, by Jón C. Stott's definition of pastoral and romance, seems to be romance, because the protagonist rejects civilized society in favor of life in the wilderness. And yet it, too, has pastoral flavoring, with its nostalgia for the simpler lifestyle of the Seneca which seems at one with nature, and its contrast between civilization and the wilds. The novel is based on a true incident in which a young white girl from eastern Pennsylvania was taken in an Indian raid by the Seneca tribe, and eventually settled in a Seneca village of some size in western New York, near the Genesee River. Lenski, in telling the story of Mary Janison, sets up a clear contrast between the lifestyle of the white settlers and that of the Indians. In the novel, as in the historic incident, Mary remains among the Indians after she is grown, even after having been located by her brothers who want to bring her "home." Mary has come to respect Indian ways, to feel that the Indians are right in wanting the land the whites have taken from them. Lenski paints
Mary's Indian lifestyle as freer and richer than her life with her white family. Just as Dalgliesh had Sarah enjoy her freedom from crinolines and heavy shoes in *The Courage of Sarah Noble*, and Brink had Caddie Woodlawn long for the freedom to move around and camp under the stars with Indian John and his people, so Lenski perceives the life close to the land that is enjoyed by the Seneca as more satisfying than that of the settlers. The difference is that whereas Caddie and Sarah turn back to "civilization" Mary is allowed to make a decision to continue to live with the Indians.

In choosing to tell Mary's story and to choose Indian ways over white ways, Lenski is following a long tradition in both Europe and the United States of romanticizing the life of the Indian; finds a fascination in the choice of Indian over white ways. The very fact that Mary Jemison has become well known in northeastern legend as "the white woman of the Genesee" is an indication of how extraordinarily interesting the circumstances of this kind of choice of Indian life over "civilized" life are to the white American consciousness.

Those romantics who worshipped the primitive found a fertile ground on the American continent for their dream of the Noble Savage. Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Emile* extolled the primitive condition, heaping praise on wilderness scenery and arguing that qualities of the primitive lifestyle should be incorporated into the life of the civilized person.33 Rousseau saw the Indians of North America as

Noble Savages, free men to be envied by the trapped civilized men of Western Europe: "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains."^{34} Rene de Chateaubriand spent five months in the United States in 1791 and delighted to be able to "mix and confound... with the wild sublimities of Nature."^{35} European romantics admired the purity, honesty, grace and nobility of the Indians, whose lives were lived close to nature.

The American pioneers had less of this feeling. The absolute freedom of the savage way of life was considered dangerous and unstable. It must, in the New World, give way to a life where individuals have responsibility to society and to the land. It was not enough merely to live from the fruits of the garden. A way of life must be carved from the wildness of the countryside, and give way to a stable society in which men make their living from the cultivation of the land.

But, just as the feeling of the loss of the uniqueness of the wilderness followed right behind the taming of it, so the loss of the truth and wisdom of Indian ways followed directly after the efforts to kill them and to destroy their culture. Ambivalence about the wilderness is reflected in ambivalence about Indians.


^{35}Rene de Chateaubriand, quoted in Nash, op. cit., p. 49.
D.H. Lawrence called it "The desire to extirpate the Indian. And the contradictory desire to glorify him."36

In this light, O'Dell's Island of the Blue Dolphins can be seen as a representation of the final advent of "civilization" over the lives of the native peoples. Karana, in her isolation on the tiny island in the Pacific, becomes a symbol for the death of the cultures of native peoples. Just as Ishi, the California Indian who survived outside of civilization alone in the wilderness for many years caught the imagination of scholar and citizens alike, so does Karana.37 There is something haunting in the image of an Indian girl surviving eighteen years, alone on the extreme western edge of the continent, evoking the loss of thousands of Indians over the course of the country's existence. This is particularly poignant when one considers the remainder of Karana's life, upon which O'Dell does not dwell in the novel. She was taken to the Santa Barbara mission after her rescue. Once there, she survived only a short time. The Indians of her island had long since disappeared, so that there was no one who understood her language or could communicate with her. She had difficulty adjusting to the rituals and ways of mission life, and, because of the language gap, remained isolated after her "rescue."


Unlike Lenski's romantic novel, in which the Seneca are at the height of their power, in the pastoral novels the Indians and the wilderness are dying. There is a kind of inevitability to this, and yet the nostalgic longing is there for times that came before in which the richness of these places and their people was still strong.

In Jean George's Julie of the Wolves, a native Eskimo girl confronts this decline of her own native civilization. Julie, or Miyax as she is named in Eskimo, embraces the wilderness rather than live with the advances of her semi-retarded husband whom she has married at thirteen to escape a harsh existence with an aunt in a small Alaska town. Julie is caught between the culture of her native people and their newly "civilized" way of life. Her father had had a good job as manager of a reindeer herd and she had lived in a house in town with him and her mother when she was small. When her mother died, Julie's father left his job and his possessions and took Julie to live in the seal camp, where they followed the old ways of the Eskimo. Julie feels these were the best times, in which she and her father lived in tune with nature. Her father tells her: "Yes, you are Eskimo, And never forget it, we live as no other people can, for we truly understand the earth."\(^{38}\) But she is forced to return to town to live with the aunt while she goes to

school. Her aunt believes in the "gussak" ways and believes her father is a failure.

When her arranged marriage disappoints her, Julie remembers her father's love of the Alaskan wilderness and chooses the tundra and the life of the wolves over life in the Alaskan small town. She hopes one day to escape to live in a nice house and her own pink bedroom with her pen-pal in San Francisco, but in the meanwhile she knows the wolves will care for her: "Wolves do not eat people. That's gussak talk. Kapugen said wolves are gentle brothers."39 Her father has helped her to understand that she is close to nature: "He told her that the birds and animals all had languages and if you listened and watched them you could learn about their enemies, where their food lay and when big storms are coming."40 And so Julie survives in the wilderness. She learns the ways of the wolves and becomes adopted by their pack, allowing them to provide food for her and using their kills to make herself warm clothing and shelter. But in spite of this, the wilderness cannot protect her. First, a wolf is wounded trying to protect Julie from a savage bear. Then, civilization encroaches on the lives of the pack. Hunters who shoot wolves from airplanes swoop down upon the pack and kill the leader:

"The air exploded and she stared up into the belly of the plane. Bolts, doors, wheels, red, white, silver, and black, the plane flashed before her eyes. In that instant she saw great

39ibid., p. 15.
40ibid., p. 79.
cities, bridges, radios, school books. She saw the pink room, long highways, TV sets, telephones, and electric lights. Black exhaust enveloped her, and civilization became this monster that snarled across the sky.41

On top of the hardships presented by both nature and by civilization, Julie's own loneliness engulfs her, and in the end, she returns to civilization. Jon C. Stott has pointed out that Julie of the Wolves exhibits all the tendencies of the pastoral novel.42 Julie longs at first not for the wilderness but to live in San Francisco. She turns to the wilderness, and to what it represented in her past only when she finds her dream of the city cannot be realized. In the end, she finds her father again, and discovers that he too has been overtaken by the modern civilized culture. He no longer lives in the old ways, and is, in fact, guiding the airplane hunters who threatened Julie's wolves. Faced with the conflict between civilization and the beauty of the natural world, Julie still makes the decision to stay with her father. George makes it clear that she has no choice. As with all pastoral novels, no matter what wisdom is gleaned from the wilderness, in the end the person must return to the city.

In the case of Julie of the Wolves, the return is one of resignation. Julie has proved that it is possible to live in harmony with nature. Jean George seems to feel that it is Julie's

41 Ibid., p. 141.
42 Stott, op. cit.
"Eskimonest" that allows this to be true. In her acceptance speech for the Newbery Medal, George quoted an Eskimo who had said to her: "To survive the Arctic, you have to be innocent and respect nature. The white men rushes the North and hence destroys it." And George's conclusion is that the wilderness and that surviving spirit of the Eskimo is ebbing. On the last page of the novel, Julie's golden plover dies. The plover, thought by the Eskimo to represent the spirit of all birds, dies when she returns to the town of her father. Julie responds to its death by singing to the spirit of the wolf, but she carefully sings in English. And what she sings is: "My mind thinks because of you, And it thinks, on this thundering night, That the hour of the wolf and the Eskimo is over." 

The Decline of the Wilderness

Jean George's nostalgia is pastoral. She sees the innocence of the Eskimo child overwhelmed and engulfed by the forces and machinery of the white people. She respects that innocence and wisdom. But she also feels that Julie's choice is the inevitable one. She says in her acceptance speech:

As I sat among the plastics and machines, I lamented the passing of the Eskimo culture that has sustained these remarkable people under the most adverse conditions in the world... More comfortable with stove and radio, Julia

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44 George, Julie of the Wolves, op. cit., p. 170.
could not, nor would anyone want her to, go back to severity. But something beautiful has been lost.  

Another novel which evokes this sense of the decline and loss of the wilderness is Virginia Hamilton's *M.C. Higgins the Great*. In this novel the Higgins family lives atop Sarah's Mountain, named for M.C.'s grandmother, a runaway slave, who came upon it enshrouded in mist as she ran for freedom, and decided to stay. The Higgins family are landed people. They do not love this land because they are farmers (M.C.'s father finds occasional work in the steel mills of Harenton some distance away) but because it is where the family has its roots:

"It's a feeling" Jones said. "Like, to think a solid piece of something big belongs to you. To your father, and his, too." Jones rubbed and twisted his hands as if they ached him."
And you to it, for a long kind of time."  

The ancestors are buried under the house and in the soil around it. The land has become Higgins land, nourished by the bodies of generations of Higgins'. Sarah's Mountain is isolated; the path to it leads through a jungle of undergrowth of vines and trees, around bends, across a river and up into steep hills. It is wilderness in the middle of a settled land. Lurhetta, a young wanderer who happens

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45 George "Newbery Acceptance Speech" op. cit., p. 102.

into the place says: "Well, it sure is pretty.... I've seen places before, but this is like being lost in a wilderness when you know there's a town close by. I walked all day yesterday. I love to walk. Everything's so quiet. I never had so much fun."47

But this wilderness is threatened. It is the threat which hangs over M.C. and his family and controls their lives. The side of the mountain above their home has been gouged out by strip mining and erosion and is eventually going to cause the mountain to fall. And M.C. has second sight. He can feel that spoil heap sliding down onto them, he dreams it and conjures up the image of it when he closes his eyes.

In this novel, clearly, it is not the wilderness which is "wild" or savage. It is technology of the so-called "superior" civilization:

Somewhere in the flatter land to the west, there was a super-shovel twenty stories high, and moving closer, some said.48

"So why don't you get a strip-mining machine? They don't care if you are day labor or if you are union."

His daddy: "They ain't machines."

M.C.: "They machines just the same as a crane."

His daddy: "They don't handle steel. They ain't machines."

M.C.: "They handle the earth."

His daddy: "They ain't machines."

M.C.: "So what are they, Daddy?"

His daddy: "They a heathen. A destroyer. They ain't machines."49

47ibid., p. 129.

48ibid., p. 53.

49ibid., p. 54.
The imagery echoes the imagery of the machinery shattering the wilderness peace which has been a constant thread in American literature. Hawthorne, Emerson, and Thoreau all wrote of the scream of the locomotive whistle which interrupted the calm of the peaceful rural reverie; so Huck Finn's peaceful raft trip is shattered along with the raft by a monstrous steamboat appearing suddenly out of the night.50

The ruin is palpably approaching in M.C. Higgins the Great, with the supershovel moving closer, just as the locomotive and steamship did earlier. The gardens are beginning not to produce. M.C.'s strange neighbors who believe that they have special powers, try to heal their lands but cannot stop the movement toward destruction: one of them says of his father: "He just can't find a way to heal a mountain is all." and M.C. pictures the boy's father "Pressing his hands on the giant gashes made by strip mining."51 For now "... the hills looked as if some gray-brown snake had curled itself along their ridges. The snake loops were mining cuts just like the ones across Sarah's Mountain, only they were a continuous gash."52 In the modern novel, the machine becomes the heathen, the


51Hamilton, op. cit., p. 18.

52Ibid., p. 38.
snake, and all the symbols of what was once the wild country. It is the destroyer, the thing to be feared, and nature and the wilderness have become the haven.

For not only does the Higgins family stay in their eroding paradise, but the outsiders continue to come. James K. Lewis, who comes to record the old songs and the speech of the mountain folk, and the girl, Lurhetta, who comes to the wilderness from the city to be refreshed and renewed, love it, but they can leave it as all pastoral heroes do, and go back to the city. They are so removed from it that they go back without understanding the wilderness or what holds its people there. Those like the Higgins who do understand the wilderness cannot leave. But the longing on the part of the outsiders is there, the realization of the inevitable but still unbearable sense of loss. Lewis, the folklorist, says of M.C.’s mother’s singing: "I knew it was here, like these hills were here, unspoiled and beautiful in my father’s time. See, so I come back to save her voice before it goes, the way these hills are going."53 And here, again, is the pastoral voice: the folklorist longs for the beauty and simplicity of his father’s hills, but while he cares about them, he feels their doom, and in the end, abandons them for the city. The wilderness that he remembers is dying.

Where the novels of the frontier experience painted a picture of a wilderness that had to be tamed to make way for the society of

53 Ibid., p. 212.
the farmers, these wilderness pastorals represent the wilderness as a place of retreat. It is still a wild place, a place which challenges and tests the courage of those who enter. But it is also a place for contemplation of one's life and existence. It is a place for the people of the city to come for renewal before they return to their city lives.

In the twentieth century Tuan's agrarian model with edenic rural landscape sandwiched between the profane city and the profane wilderness which the pioneer novels follow so closely, is no longer the model of American ideas about the wilds. It has been replaced with the kind of philosophical framework which exists in these wilderness pastorals. There is still an edenic middle landscape which is rural and agricultural. But now the wilderness, having been threatened and destroyed, is perceived to be edenic as well. As Tuan points out there is irony in the use of the word "preserve" when we talk of wilderness preservation. By definition, we have already tamed something when we move to preserve it. The savagery and mystery of the wilderness are already almost gone.

The wilderness which was once a threat to our existence now is threatened. The new wilderness is a place of recreation and renewal and not of destruction. What has replaced the wilderness as the profane area of the model is the new wilderness: the city.

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As Nash points out, the term wilderness is used more frequently now in terms of the city than in terms of the countryside.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{55}Nash, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 3.
CHAPTER IV
THE PASTORAL ROMANCE

Background: The Pastoral Novel and the Pastoral Romance

Jon C. Stott clearly differentiates between the pastoral novel, in which characters experience an ideal arcadia but return to an imperfect world, and the romantic novel in which characters choose to remain in the arcadian world. The pastoral novel, Stott says is ironic in intent, revealing always the conflict between the natural countryside and the forces of society, whereas in the romance, characters can choose the countryside and "live happily ever after" there.

And yet, beyond this definition, there are a number of "romance" novels for children that retain a pastoral flavor in that they clearly show lives spent close to nature and in tune with the seasons and living things as simpler, healthier, more naturally moral, and happier than lives spent in the city. They are indeed "romances" in the sense that the families and individuals who live in these situations choose to stay in them. They feel no need for sophisticated city life. They combine the pastoral and the romantic viewpoints in their nostalgia for a simpler life.

William Empson has pointed out that it is not really contradictory for both pastoral and romantic ideas to be included in a novel. In discussing Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Empson points out that this book is part of the romantic tradition in pastoralism, which he calls "child as swain" in which the child rather than a rustic or shepherd, is the commentor on the failings of civilized society. Alice is pictured as the sanest person in Wonderland, who, by her very efforts at making sense of that world, reveals its flaws. Empson comments on the adoration of the childhood state and its reflection in books for children in the Victorian period. He says of Victorian writers that the impure world of the adult "made it hard to be an artist, and they kept a sort of taproot going down to their experience as children." In this light Empson feels the most revealing character in Alice is the mock-turtle, who was perhaps like Lewis Carroll in his longing for his lost childhood.

Peter Marinelli has called this kind of novel, in which the child's world seems purer than that of adults, "the pastoral of childhood." Childhood is "a time of innocence every individual


3Ibid., p. 261.

can remember." "All that is necessary is that memory and imagination should conspire to render a not too distant past of comparative innocence as more pleasureable than a harsh present, overwhelmed by a growth of technology or the shadows of advancing age."5

In the twentieth century the golden pastures of Theocritus' Arcadia are replaced for some authors by the individual's own childhood, wherever it may have been spent. Marinelli sites Laurie Lee's Cider with Rosie, Thomas Wolfe's Long Homeward Angel, and Richard Llewellyn's How Green was My Valley as examples of this type of pastoralism. Lynen quotes W.W. Greg: "What does appear to be a constant element in the pastoral as known to literature is the recognition of a contrast, implicit or expressed, between pastoral life and some more complex type of civilization..."6

It is the implied contrast that exists so strongly in many of the novels for children. Numerous authors for children, including, for example, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Carol Ryrie Brink, Virginia Sorensen, and Eleanor Estes, have affirmed that they do have what Empson called the "tap-root" down into their own childhoods. Eleanor Estes has said:

> It seems to me one could never empty the pool of childhood, for the "child is father to the man"; and even when writing of the widening experiences of later years, the impressions and thoughts and

5ibid., p. 3.

color of one's own childhood are cast in the tone of one's writing. 7

Many authors for children write out of their own backgrounds which may be rural, or steeped in the tradition of literature of rural life. What results can be termed the "pastoral romance." Examples of this kind of work from the Newbery list include Carolyn Sherwin Bailey's Miss Hickory, Nancy Barnes' The Wonderful Year, Margery Bianco's Winterbound, Elizabeth Enright's Gone-Away Lake and Thimble Summer, Eleanor Estes' Ginger Pye, The Middle Moffat and Rufus M, Doris Gates' Blue Willow, Bette Greene's Philip Hall Likes Me I Reckon Maybe, Marguerite Henry's Misty of Chincoteague, Robert Lawson's Rabbit Hill, Jennie D. Lindquist's The Golden Name Day, Mabel Robinson's Bright Island, Virginia Sorensen's Miracles on Maple Hill, Phil Stong's Honk the Moose and E.B. White's Charlotte's Web. In these novels for children life in the country is romanticized. People are living life in tune with the earth, content, moving with the rhythms of nature and the seasons. The heroes of these novels do not, as far as the reader knows, grow up to become city-dwellers. They live forever content in their rural world. But these novels are also implicitly pastoral. Being set in rural areas, they represent to twentieth century children a world that has largely disappeared. Just as the pastoral poet conveys the contrasts between urban and rural life through focus on the pastoral

setting, so these authors for children imply, consciously or unconsciously, a contrast between urban lifestyles and rural lifestyles.

While the term "romance" is used to indicate the contentment that characters feel in their rural existence, this is not to imply that this existence is all easygoing and light-hearted. What the pastoral romance does is to confront the basic issues which we all must face in life, but within the context of the rural setting. John Lynen has said this is the pastoral "art" of Robert Frost. Frost paints a detailed picture of a very distinct rural landscape, but one which is a microcosm "within which the great world beyond is mirrored."  

The Pattern of the Pastoral Romance

The clearest example of this use of the rural world as a microcosm for life is E.B. White's classic fantasy, Charlotte's Web, written in 1952. White has called his novel a "hymn to the barn" but it is more accurately a hymn to life. Growth, process and change happen on every page, played out in a setting where this is completely natural and right. Death was not generally discussed in twentieth century novels for children until the middle nineteen seventies when a flood of books about death and dying were published.

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8Lynen, op. cit., p. 128.

And yet this classic book is filled with images of death. The opening lines of the book reveal it with a contrast immediately established between birth and death:

"Where's Papa going with that ax?" said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast.
"Out to the hoghouse," replied Mrs. Arable.
"Some pigs were born last night."
"I don't see why he needs an ax..."10

The runt pig, Wilbur, for whom the ax was intended, escapes death at this point but learns about life and death very quickly. He is spared the ax but soon befriends Charlotte, a spider, who is a killer herself. At first, he is gloomy at the prospect of having such a bloodthirsty friend, but Charlotte explains that that's how she is made; that spiders for thousands and thousands of years have been "trappers."

Shortly after, Wilbur learns that he too is fated to die. He lives and eats just so that he can be killed. This threat to Wilbur's life hangs over all of the novel and provides the basic substance of its plot. But the story is pastoral rather than depressing. White paints always an image of the balance of the seasons, of life and death, of joy and grief. These things are all bound up with living; they are natural and inevitable. The "lilacs bloom and make the air sweet and then fade."11 Seven goslings are


11*ibid.*, p. 42.
born but one other egg does not hatch. The song sparrow "who knows how brief and lovely life is, says, "sweet, sweet, sweet interlude, sweet, sweet, sweet interlude." Charlotte finds a way to save Wilbur's life, and then, as all creatures must, she dies. Even in the end, White contrasts joy and sorrow. Charlotte dies alone in the empty fairgrounds, but her children return to the barn with Wilbur to live out their own lives with him.

And White ends with a benediction: life is good, made all the sweeter by the knowledge that it is brief and filled with joy as well as sorrow:

Life in the barn was very good-night and day, winter and summer, spring and fall, dull days and bright days. It was the best place to be, thought Wilbur, this warm delicious cellar, with the garrulous geese, the changing seasons, the heat of the sun, the passage of swallows, the nearness of rats, the sameness of sheep, the love of spiders, the smell of manure, and the glory of everything.13

White has used the barn and its life to reflect all life and death. The pastoral of the barnyard becomes a microcosm of all the world.

The Role of Animals in the Pastoral Romance

Charlotte's Web is also representative of a common pastoral (and also romantic) conception of animals. Roger Sale has pointed out in reference to the novel that White and other authors are clearly saying that humans value animals less than human beings but

12 Ibid., p. 43.
13 Ibid., p. 183.
that "it is only human egotism and busyness that prevents us from seeing the lives of animals that are lived all around us, lives that could, they say, be understood in human terms."\(^{14}\) Certainly White's fantasy starts with a realistic issue of the barnyard - whether it's economically feasible to keep a runt pig alive - then becomes a romance of a more benign vision: that Wilbur, being a unique pig, has a right to his natural life. This seems a particularly romantic attitude when compared with a more realistic novel such as Robert Newton Peck's *A Day No Pigs Would Die* in which a boy's pet pig must be killed to feed the family during the depression. The issue of animals' lives is raised also in Virginia Sorensen's *Miracles of Maple Hill*. When Marly's family moves into a long-abandoned house on Maple Hill, the place is inhabited by mice. Her parents' reaction is to trap the mice, then drop them into the hot stove. Marly finds this horrifying. She sees the mice's right to be in the house as equal to the family's right:

> Think how happy those mice were in this house until we had to come. That's just the way my history teacher said people were - there were all those nice buffalos and everything. And bears. And deer and antelope and everything. And beaver. And then all those horrible old people came..."\(^{15}\)

Marly's family think that she is disturbed over nothing until they spend an evening with their farmer neighbor. He is a man who


is so natural he resembles a tree: "He seemed to stand with his legs planted firmly in the ground." Mr. Chris admits of mice, "They've got to live, haven't they? Same as we do."  

However, later in the book, this same neighbor lets Marly down when he goes out to hunt the fox which is attacking his chickens. Marly has seen the fox with its litter of young and feels that the foxes have a right to try to live too. She and her brother trick the foxes into leaving their den so that the hunters don't find them.

Sorensen doesn't seem to know how to solve this dilemma about animals. Marly is considered to be too soft-hearted a child, too citified, and yet her kindness is supported by those around her. At the same time, her behavior is considered to be somewhat abnormal, as hunting and fishing and continued trapping of mice go on around her without further comment on the author's part. It is as if Sorensen knows that this kind of give and take of life and death takes place whenever humans and animals try to live together but doesn't want to make a definite statement one way or the other as to what is right or wrong.

She did admit in her Newbery Award acceptance speech that it was the "rhythms of existence" in the Pennsylvania countryside which she wanted to capture in the novel: the life and death, growth and renewal, with the image of the sugar maples as the clearest

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16ibid., p. 119.
17ibid., p. 38.
symbol of this process. But as to how exactly animals and humans worked out these rhythms, Sorensen is less sure or clear.

Jean Kelty comments in her article "The Cult of Kill in Adolescent Fiction" that reconciling oneself to the death of animals is considered to be a sign of maturation in American fiction. What appears to be true in these pastoral novels is that while the killing is not always condoned by adults, love and caring for all creatures and distress at the thought of practical killing is much more the province of the child. That "pastoral" child who is purer and closer to nature is the one who saves Wilbur from the ax, and the foxes from the gun.

Robert Lawson's fantasy Rabbit Hill makes the clearest statement of the pastoral romantic notion of the relations between humans and animals. In this novel it is not the child but the animals who are wise about the ways of nature and how creatures get along. The story is told from the point of view of the rabbits who live in the garden of Rabbit Hill, an estate in the countryside of Connecticut. The house has been abandoned for some time; the garden has become an unproductive wilderness. This is less pleasing to the rabbits than a "garden." The animals of Rabbit Hill eagerly await the new tenants of the hill, hoping that they will be "planting folk." In


this novel all "wild" life is in harmony and is set against the life of society. On the hill the grey fox and the rabbit are friends; they share a common enemy in the hounds who are trained by "civilized" men to hunt them both.

The animals understand about the cycles of life. Uncle Analda, an elderly rabbit, explains it to his nephew Georgie:

Us folks just went on a-raisin' of our own young ones and a-tendin' to our own affairs, but new Folks kep a-comin' and after a while this here whole valley was full of little mills and factories and all them fields there along the high ridge was growing thick with wheat and potatoes and onions and Folks was everywhere and the big wagons a-rumblin' and a-rollin' along this very road, just a-spillin' out grain and hay and all. Them was Good Times for everybody.

... There's Good Times Georgie, an' there's Bad Times, but they go, An' there's Good Folks an' there's Bad Folks an' they go too - but there's always new Folks comin'.

What the animals like best are the planting folk who use no guns, no dogs, and no fences and who are willing to share with all the animals of Rabbit Hill. The animals are lucky in this story: they get their wish, a couple who like wild creatures, who plant a huge garden, and also a special "rabbit" garden just for the animals, who tend the sick creatures and find life on the hill peaceful and right. Lawson's message, as carved on the statue of St. Francis in the "rabbit" garden, is "There is enough for all." Here in the garden, nature is benign to those who are in tune with it but not for others:

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Tim McGrath surveyed the flourishing garden and lifted his voice in wonderment. "Louie," he said, "I just can't understand it. Here's these new folks with their garden and no sign of a fence around it, no traps, no poison, no nothing; and not a thing touched, not a thing. Not a footprint on it, not even a cutworm. Now me, I've got all them things, fences, traps, poisons; even sat up some nights with a shot-gun - and what happens? All my carrots gone and half my beets, cabbages et into, tomatoes tromp down and lawn all tore up with moles."21

The story seems to be a straightforward romance, especially to a gardener. The irony which is the mark of the pastoral novel is apparent however in the words of Lawson's Newbery acceptance speech. Rabbit Hill is his own property. He too had one garden for the animals and one for his family, but the real animals were not as respectful of the division between them as the animals of the novel are. His solution in his own life was one only a city person who lives in the country can choose to make when the fruits of his garden do not keep him alive: he removed the gardens. He no longer grew any of the flowers the animals liked to eat and he didn't grow vegetables at all.

Certainly if it comes to a choice between looking out in the early morning and seeing two or three deer wandering about the lawn and a mess of string beans, I'll take the deer anytime.22

21 Ibid., p. 128.

Lawson's neighbors always had a surplus of vegetables anyway. Lawson did not indicate whether he thought about the killing which might have gone on for the neighbors to raise vegetables, but he let them do it, and accepted their gifts when they offered them. As for the moles which tore up his lawn, he caught them in a box and carefully let them go on the lawn of an unpleasant neighbor. In his novel, there is a serene understanding between humans and nature; they are able to live together in peace. In his own life, Lawson revealed that this pastoral vision was not quite so true.

Part of the romantic pastoral vision is that animals who represent "nature" and humans come to live in harmony. While in the pastoral novel the person who enters the wilderness is expected, like Julie in *Julie of the Wolves*, to accmodate himself or herself to the creatures of the wild and their ways, quite often in romantic pastorals written for children, the beasts do the accommodating. It is as if the pastoral child, being already somehow closer to nature than the adult, can by his or her very presence "tame" creatures. The adult fantasy seems to be to become more wild as evidenced by such books as Cooper's romances and the Tarzan series. The pastoral child, on the other hand, by accepting the wildness of nature, causes it to become tame instead.

An example is Marguerite Henry's *Misty of Chincoteague*, in which Misty is the foal of Phantom, both ponies having been captured in the annual pony roundup on Assateague Island. Phantom is so wild that, for her own happiness, she is set free again on the
island, but her foal, cared for by the children, comes to love the ways of the farmyard and is tamed. So also does the mother badger who has cared for Ben MacDonald in Eckart's *Incident at Hawk's Hill* become tamed by him and reconciled to life on the farm. Countless other books for children including Phil Stong's *Honk the Mouse*, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' *The Yearling*, Lynd Ward's *The Biggest Bear*, and several books by Walt Morey including *Gentle Ben*, *Kavik the Wolf Dog* and *Gloomy Gus* deal with wild animals which have been tamed by children.

These books echo the frontier pastoral novels, in which the wilderness is tamed and cleared to make way for civilization. In these pastoral romances, as in the novels of the frontier, it is more common that creatures should accommodate their ways to those of humankind, than that humans should accept the ways of the wild creatures.

**Seasonal Structure in the Romance**

All of these pastoral romances in which humans live in awareness of and harmony with nature are set in rural areas. They are not ever wildernesses but thriving agrarian areas. A number of them are set on small farms. Others are set in rural landscapes in which an agrarian vision still predominates; where houses are far apart, people keep gardens, and live their lives close to the cycles of the seasons. What all of these books have in common is their form. The books take their very structure from the natural world, from the passing of the seasons and the day-to-day life of the land. All
attempt to see life in keeping with the rhythms of nature. It is most common that the framework of the plot revolves around the seasons. Philip Hall Likes Me I Reckon Maybe is an account from September to September of Beth Lambert's life. The Wonderful Year is a season-by-season account of life on an apple ranch. Others focus on a particular season such as Winterbound, Gone-Away Lake and Thimble Summer. Sorensen's Miracles on Maple Hill takes the reader from Spring to Spring on Maple Hill. She talks about the differences between city life, with its loss of a sense of the seasons and the weather:

You people in cities don't need to think about the weather. Down there it's just a matter of getting yourselves out of one door and into another. But it's different up here! What a storm! Chris says nothing's as important in the country as the weather.23

Pastoral Romances with a Farm Setting

Two novels which are set on farms and contain a bucolic pastoral vision of rural life are Bette Greene's Philip Hall Likes Me I Reckon Maybe and Elizabeth Enright's Thimble Summer. In Philip Hall Likes Me I Reckon Maybe, young Beth Lambert is growing up on her father's pig and poultry farm in rural Arkansas. Beth is a schemer and ambitious, but also a charmer. She works hard in school, makes spending money selling garden produce at a roadside stand, raises a calf in her 4H club and still has time to get into a great deal of mischief with her friendly enemy, Philip Hall.

23Sorensen, op. cit., p. 47.
The novel is romantically pastoral because it has so little to do with the day-to-day drudgery and hard work of farming. What is stressed is the contentment, the well-being of life in the country. One doesn't read about any actual care of the garden for the produce Beth sells, one only hears that she put in a lot of work on the garden. One doesn't hear about the day-to-day care of the calf, one only sees it win the blue ribbon. Beth's days are filled with the kind of rural pleasures that children would have who have no responsibilities on a farm.

Elizabeth Enright's *Thimble Summer* is set in Wisconsin in the thirties. The book begins ominously with a drought in which the corn and oats are parched and dry and in danger of dying. Garnet's brother Jay says, "I don't want to be a farmer and watch my good crops eaten with wheat rust or dried up with drought. I don't want to spend my life waiting for weather."24 But this is a pastoral romance and the crops are saved. A thunderstorm comes up and drenches the parched earth, bringing an end to the drought.

In the novels by Laura Ingalls Wilder, droughts happened and often the rain did not relieve the conditions. Pa's crops died and the family moved on or he found other work to do in town until the good weather came again. In *Thimble Summer*, the rain always comes.

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As in *Rabbit Hill* the irony of this event is not overtly expressed in the novel. But Enright said in her Newbery Award speech that as an adult she was visiting the farm in Wisconsin where her mother and grandmother had grown up when such a drought was going on. For days and days the family hand-carried buckets of precious water into the fields and still they could not save the crops. So Enright says, she wrote *Thimble Summer* to "insult the weather":

> It was a terrifying and infuriating thing to live with, nothing is so infuriating as weather behaving viciously, and you can't help feeling as though it had a grudge against mankind. You find yourself impotently hating it, and feeling offended.25

In Enright's own experience, the rain came too late and her valley suffered terrible losses from which it did not recover for some time. But in the novel the rain comes and the romance of rural existence goes on. Even brother Jay decides to stay, especially when a former drifter talks about farming as opposed to the rest of the world:

> "Eric, what do you want to be a farmer for?" he asked disappointedly. "There's no adventure to that; that's no way to see the world."
> "I've already seen plenty of the world, thanks," Eric said. "Plenty of adventure, too, if you want to call it that. I like this better. I want to stay right here for years and years and years. And you know anyway, I like farming..."26

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Enright's desire is to present the world of the farm, with its richness of experience and its abundance, through the eyes of a child. She says:

One naturally goes back to one's childhood to find things. To me the astonishing thing is in the way one took life during those years...A child sees everything sharp and radiant...Happiness is more truly happiness than it will ever be again.27

She wants to picture childhood, in this case, the childhood she feels was experienced by her mother as well as by herself, in the nostalgic pastoral way that Marinelli has described it, as a golden age. She says of the child:

Always for him, there is the large, uncomplicated fact that he is loved and protected, fed and disciplined and dealt with justly by his family. The world for him is a secure, eternal place. Let us hope, even in such sick and troubled times as these, that some day it will be the privilege of every child to feel this.28

In the pastoral romances in which children are growing up happily in rural areas, any hint of the difficulty of life in society is only implied. Never is it stated in these stories that all is not right with the world elsewhere, or even on the farm or in the countryside itself. However, as Lawson's and Enright's comments on their writings reveal, quite often the pastoral romance is itself a comment on the author's feelings about contemporary life. It is, as Enright says, an "insult" flung in the face of the world of their adulthood


28Ibid., p. 175.
in which life is not as easy and sparkling as the world of their childhood seems to them to have been.

The Country versus the City

A number of the pastoral romances create a contrast between places as well as between a possible past time and the present. In seven of the pastoral romances, the family comes into the rural pastoral setting from the city and decides to make it home. The city is rejected over the life of the country. Often this is not expressed as overt hostility so much as a reiteration of common notions about city life. R. Gordon Kelly points out that the commonly held beliefs in the late 19th century about the city were that the city is inimical to family life; that it is dominated by rootlessness; that a natural gentility occurs in the country as a result of rural lifestyles that one cannot find in the city; and that constricted space in the city prevents the full flowering of children and their activities.  

Kelly summarizes by saying that the outdoor life of the country is communal, familial, and dependent on the weather, the seasons and the common earth. On the other hand, city life is contemplative, indoors, sedentary, and anxious.

These notions about the city are reflected in the twentieth century novels for children in which families leave the city for the countryside. Sometimes it is for a sense of psychological well-being.

In Elizabeth Enright's *Gone-Away Lake*, Portia and Foster Blake come to the country every summer to stay with their cousins to get fresh air and sunshine while their parents remain at work in the city. Sometimes it is for reasons of health. In Jennie Lindquist's *The Golden Name Day*, Nancy comes to stay with her grandparents because she has been ill:

> He looked down at her and saw how pale she was.  
> "It will do you good to be out-of-doors," he said.  
> "You will get strong and rosy-cheeked."^{30}

In Nancy Barnes' *The Wonderful Year*, the whole family moves from Kansas to Colorado to an apple ranch because Father, an attorney, has overworked, and the doctor has said only the outdoors and relaxation will cure him. And in the most dramatic of these emigrations from the city, Marly's family in *Miracles on Maple Hill* comes to the country for her father's sake. He has been in a concentration camp and they have come hoping the outdoors and the life of the country will cure him of the depression he has been in since his return.

The novels are not openly hostile to the city, it just isn't as pleasant or as healthy a place to live.

In Mabel Robinson's *Bright Island*, a young girl named Rest-and-Be-Thankful is content with her life on the family farm on an island off the coast of Maine, but her brothers and their wives who live on the mainland convince her parents that, for her own sake, she must

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leave the island and move to the city to attend school. But unlike the young people of the frontier novels, Thankful will not accept this linear move away from her beloved farm. When her schooling is completed, she returns to the island to farm and to "Rest-and-be-Thankful" in the simple rural patterns of island life.

In some cases, there is ambivalence. Marly's brother Joe is not sure that he wants to be stuck in the country. He loves to explore the city, loves his big school, and his role in the marching band. His sister, "... knew all the things Joe loved about the city. He liked the bridges and the hills and even the steel mills. He liked the noise and people and policemen. He had his crowd and they went all kinds of places together."31

In Margery Bianco's *Winterbound*, the family is also divided. Garry loves to garden and loves the wild things. She is perfectly at home in the country. Her sister Kay is an artist and is less happy in their new home: "For Kay was not fundamentally a country person, much as she loved the beauty of the hills and the sky. City life and all the things that went with it meant much more to her..."32 Kay misses the art, theatre, books and her friends in the city. Garry finds this hard to understand:

> How could anyone want to live anywhere but in the country, she wondered, her eyes resting on the valley below her, on the long roof, of the old house set

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31Sorensen, op. cit., p. 111.

among its yellowed maple trees, and on the small gray roof below it, with smoke curling up from its chimney, a gray wisp on the clear air. Out here it was as though the city did not exist, and so far as Garry was concerned it could cease to exist forever, for she had none of Kay's hankerings for city life and comforts...33

And in the end, these family members who at first miss the city become strong advocates for remaining in the country. They are as overcome by the peace and pleasures of country life as the rest of their families. Any person who is ill or down in spirits when arriving in the country is soon healed. It is a tribute to rural life that managing an apple orchard is not as stressful for Ellen's father as being a lawyer in Kansas in The Wonderful Year and after a year he is wonderfully relaxed. He is so much better that the family decides to move to Colorado permanently. Similarly, after a year in the countryside of Pennsylvania, Marly's sick and troubled father is cured of his war injuries and this family also decides to remain in the country permanently.

Carolyn Sherwin Bailey's fantasy Miss Hickory, combines the sense of the patterns of nature with the idea that the rural experience is the most natural one. Miss Hickory at the outset of the novel is a very civilized doll. Although she is made of apple-wood twigs and has a hickory nut for a head, she is a stylish character who lives in a small house at the foot of a New Hampshire family's steps. When the family moves to Boston for the winter, abandoning

33 Ibid., p. 31.
her, Miss Hickory is forced from her home and seeks shelter in the trees beyond the farm. She is befriended by the wild creatures and harassed by a squirrel who finally steals her hickory nut head, but she becomes more and more at home in the country. When the children return to the house in the spring and go to look for her, they find Miss Hickory perfectly adapted to her life in the country: she has become grafted onto the apple tree where she has been living, and she is in bloom.

Nostalgia for the Past

Part of the simplicity and tranquility of country life lies in the fact that many of the so-called comforts of the city are unavailable. Most families choose to live without telephones, electricity, drive only rarely, and use wood-burning stoves for heat and cooking. The bright lights of Thankful’s school in Bright Island, hide the patterns of the stars. And as Mr. Chris explains in Miracles on Maple Hill, "If you start using machinery for everything you get so you don't know anymore, it seems to me." 34

The most intriguing example of this kind of self-conscious return to the past to obtain the simple life is Elizabeth Enright's Gone-Away Lake. It begins with a summer vacation in the country for two city children. Soon after their arrival Portia and her cousin Julian go exploring the woods and they discover Gone-away Lake. Here, by the shores of a marsh that once was a lake, sits a row of

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34 Sorensen, op. cit., p. 39.
Victorian summer homes which once belonged to families from the cities south of the lake. And in the old abandoned houses live Minnehahah Cheever and her brother Pindar Payton who were unhappy in the world of the city and so came back after many years to their fallen-down retreat in the country. They live off of the fruits of this strange urban wilderness, wearing old clothes left in the houses, using the old furniture, and gathering wild foods to eat, as well as raising chickens and goats. These two old people are living in harmony with the nature of the wilderness. They don't kill the hornets that swarm in the upstairs of the old houses in which they live, or the mosquitos that fly around them. They live with them peaceably. They provide a rabbit garden just as in Rabbit Hill although they take the precaution of fencing their own. They have pure water to drink, sunshine, fresh milk and bread and homemade jam. They also have most of the supplies that they need. Minnehaha never leaves their retreat although Pindar drives an ancient Model T into town once a month for a haircut and supplies. Portia and Julian come to enjoy the company and wisdom of these two people who live in the simpler ways of an earlier time. At the end of a happy summer Portia's family is so content with this slower, simpler world that they decide to purchase one of the old houses to fix up as a summer retreat.

The Longing for Roots

One of these pastoral romances, Doris Gates' Blue Willow, written in 1940, paints a somewhat grimmer picture of life outside of the pastoral countryside. Janey Larkin, her father and step-mother
arrive at a small shack in the San Joaquin Valley after five years on the road as migrant farm workers. Her father had owned a ranch in northern Texas until five years before when the drought and dust storms of the Dust Bowl wiped him out financially. The family is destitute, the step-mother is ill, and Janey fears that they will be on the road forever. Janey wants to settle down more than anything. She has read the Bible and knows that there is a promised land. And she owns a Blue Willow plate. The plate pictures a bridge on a river with a house next to it, under the willow trees, and Janey daydreams that this plate represents a real place where the family can settle. When the neighbors take her to the fair in Fresno, she thinks that maybe she has found the place:

Janey was lost in admiration of this abundance. Nowhere except in the pages of the Old Testament had she ever come upon such bounty. She felt as the men sent to spy out the land of Canaan must have felt. Surely this San Joaquin Valley was a land flowing with milk and honey. If she had ever stopped to think about it, she wouldn't have supposed there could be so many different kinds of things to eat in all the world, and here they were spread out before her feasting eyes, within reach of her hand. 35

Janey gets her wish for permanence. Her father is given a job as ranch foreman. The family gains when their honesty is played against the dishonesty of the ranch foreman. His greed leads to his own downfall and causes the Larkin's fortunes to turn. Later, a

house is built for them, near a river and a bridge just as it appears on the willow plate.

It is particularly apparent that this is romance when one compares it to Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* which was published just the year before it in 1939. The Joad family too must leave their dusted out plot of land, have strong family ties, feel a kinship with the Bible stories of the land of Canaan, and want above all to own and work their own land. But the Joads are doomed to failure and disappointment. The family falls apart and the land does not materialize. While the ending is hopeful of perhaps later good fortune, it is not nearly the bucolic picture of pluck and honesty and hard work paying off that *Blue Willow* presents. We do not live with Janey's family through their five years of disappointment and failure as we live with the Joads. We join them as their fortunes are turning. We come away from *Blue Willow* still believing in the American values of hard work, honesty, straightforwardness, and the farm life as optimum ways of conducting one's life.

*Blue Willow* is representative of most of the novels for young people about the lives of migrant workers in that in most of them the dream and goal of the families and individuals is to settle enough farmland on which to live and work. There are a number of novels for young people about the plight of the farm workers in this country, including Sarah Schmidt's *The New Land*, Lois Lenski's *Judy's Journey*, Ester Wier's *The Loner*, Zilpha Snyder's *The Velvet Room*, and Sue Ellen Bridgers' *Home Before Dark*. 
These books have a common approach to the farm worker problem. They see the answer to the struggles of these migratory workers in the plot of land and the farm of their own. In each case, in these novels, the evil is in the system, not in farming itself. In all, the individual or family ends up settled on a farm, or in a rural area and working again. These novels too are affirmations of rural agricultural existence.

The Small Town

Another form of pastoral romance quite common among books for children is the "small town" story. In novels such as Phil Stong's *Honk the Moose*, Joseph Krugold's *Onion John*, and Eleanor Estes' *Ginger Pye*, *The Middle Moffat*, and *Rufus M*, small town life takes on the same healthy pleasant tone exhibited in the rural novels. Estes' *Ginger Pye* is a prime example of this type. The small town of Cranbury, Connecticut plays the same kind of mediating role between the city and the open wilderness that the farm does. The Pyes live in Cranbury because it is half-way between Boston and New York, their two favorite cities, and because father is an ornithologist, who needs to be near the country because he studies the birds of the marshes and fields around the town. The Pye children live the same happy rural existence in this small town as farm children do. They acquire Ginger from a litter of puppies at a dairy within walking distance of their house. They picnic in the woods outside of town and pick strawberries in the fields behind the railroad station. They have the normal troubles of childhood with lost dogs and school
disappointments and a scare by a tramp. But, like the children of Thimble Summer and Gone-Away Lake and Philip Hall Likes Me I Reckon. Maybe, their lives are secure, their families loving and their worries are small ones. They live in the same endless cycle of the seasons and the natural world, secure in the knowledge of its continuance, as do their farming cousins.
CHAPTER V

THE MIDDLE GROUND:

NOVELS ABOUT SHEEP AND SHEPHERDS

Background: The Role of Sheep in Literature

Of all the domestic beasts, sheep have played the largest symbolic role in western culture. The shepherds and their flocks portrayed in the early pastoral poetry of Theocritus and Virgil appear as well in the pastoral imagery of both the Old and the New Testaments. The Bible is peopled with shepherds from Cain and Abel and David to the shepherds who followed the star to Bethlehem. Jesus embodied the symbolic meaning of the shepherd, being both the Lamb of God and the Good Shepherd. Shakespeare used shepherds to parody the pastoral form in As You Like It. The poetry of Burns, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Matthew Arnold contains pastoral images of shepherds and their flocks.

While the pastoral tradition in literature has broadened to include many other "rustic" types beyond the image of the shepherd, indeed, has been defined as any piece of literature that idealizes the rural at the expense of the city and its ideas; the truly pastoral notion, inherent in the word itself (from the Latin pastoralis meaning shepherd) has been preserved in the world of American children's books.
Out of the body of novels set in the United States which have won or been honored with the Newbery Medal, seven concern the lives of shepherds and their flocks.¹

There is no overt indication as to why these books should be so popular with award-presenting committees. Certainly sheepherding has not played such an important role in American history that numbers of novels should have been written about this lifestyle. Indeed, if this were the case, one would at least expect to find comparable numbers of novels about cattle ranching and cattle drives which played a far more significant role in the settling of the West. Only one book, Will James' Smoky the Cowhorse, among this selection of American award winners deals with this topic.

There are several possible explanations for this interest in the life of the shepherd. All are probably at work in these choices and all are linked. The first lies in the symbolic image of the lamb in western culture. Not only has the notion of caring for flocks become a symbol but the notion of the lamb as innocent creature, close to God's creation, and in need of protection has come to be associated with the same qualities in the human child. Thus, the baby Jesus being represented as the lamb of God led to certain conventions in painting and literature in which lambs came to show this same kind

¹Several Newbery books concern the lives of shepherds in other countries as well, including Ann Nolan Clark's Secret of the Andes (1952) and Kate Seredy's The Good Master (1935).
of innocence and need of protection. The best-known of these is probably William Blake's "The Lamb" from *Songs of Innocence*. Since children and lambs have been associated in this way, perhaps it is this connection which motivates authors who write for children to explore the subject of sheep in their novels.

Connected to this image of "lamb as child" is the image of "shepherd as teacher." The image of Christ as the Good Shepherd, as teacher, is echoed in each of the novels as a shepherd takes the teaching role with the young protagonist in the story. The young shepherd follows his teacher in learning the ways of the flock.

In several of the stories this mentor is a keeper of the old ways. The wisdom of the old shepherd is traditional wisdom passed on to the youngster. The old shepherd comes of generations of shepherds and shares their ancient wisdom. This sense of tradition is expressed in Krumgold's *... And Now Miguel*:

> For that is the work of our family, to raise sheep.  
In our country, wherever you find a man from the Chavez family, with him will be a flock of sheep.  
It has been this way for many years, even hundreds, my grandfather told me. Long before the Americans came to New Mexico, long before there was any such thing here called the United States, there was a Chavez family in this place with sheep. It was so even in Spain where our family began. It is so even today.2

It is no accident that there is little reference to modern grazing techniques and mechanized farming technology in these stories. Instead, in keeping with the pastoral mode the novels other than Sing Down the Moon which is set in a specific historical context, are set in an indistinct time. Elizabeth Yates states in her introduction to Mountain Born that she has not established a specific time or place for her story because shepherds and shepherding are like a common denominator: there is a constancy to this life no matter where it takes place and no matter what time. This constancy comes from the traditions emphasized in the novels; the sense of shepherding is more linked to the past than to the present.

This sense of constancy is, perhaps, another explanation for the popularity of shepherds in American children's novels. As in the traditional pastoral, the work of the shepherd follows the natural cycle of birth, growth and death, providing a rhythmic pattern for the plot. The lives of the sheep from the cavorting of the young lambs, through the long days grazing in the pasture, with their dangers as well as peace, to the taking of the wool, which clothes and, when sold, feeds the shepherd, and then, eventually, the death of the sheep, and its use for food, provide a kind of complete picture in which there is a balance between nature and people;

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3Yates, Elizabeth, Mountain Born (New York: Coward-McCann, 1943), (Introduction).
the two work together for mutual good and prosperity. As Peter's mother thought in Mountain Born: "...how good it was to work when nature worked with one."4

The Role of the Indian Shepherd

Three novels which use the lives of the sheep to represent the background and movement of all life clearly show this pattern. Interestingly, all three of these novels are about the Navajo Indians. The pattern of the grazing of flocks, the taking of the wool, and weaving it into blankets and other clothing items is used as the pattern for the stability and constancy of Navajo life.

In Oliver La Farge's introduction to Waterless Mountain, he talks about the trust and friendship between the author, Laura Adams Armer and the Navajo people. When La Farge met her in 1924, she had already been granted access to sand painting ceremonies and other revelations of the spiritual nature of the Navajo which they normally kept from whites because they didn't expect them to understand the ceremonies or their meaning.

The spiritual life and coming of age of Younger Brother, a young Navajo, is the basis of this slow-moving novel in which Younger Brother tends his mother's sheep, watches the progression of the seasons, and protects the sheep from the mountain lions which prey upon them. The novel has a linear plot, in which Younger Brother shuns the "female" role of the shepherd and longs to be old enough

4ibid., p. 4.
to go as a hunter with his brother, and to be a farmer and jeweler like his father. Still, the circular pattern of the shepherding provides the basic atmosphere of the book. The watching of the sheep, gathering of the wool, the weaving of rugs, and selling them to the trader form the backdrop for the events of the story. And Younger Brother is not destined to be a hunter or a planter. He has the gift of "singing" and becomes a spiritual leader of his people. His singing allows him to belong with the very patterns of nature he has experienced in his life with the sheep: "Singing was good. It made one brother to the wind, the locusts, the birds, and the coyote."^5

Miska Miles' *Annie and the Old One* uses the imagery of the weaving of the blanket from the wool of the sheep to convey this same imagery. The Old One announces to her family that when the blanket weaving is completed, she will die. Her granddaughter Annie tries to stop the weaving of the pattern in order to prevent her grandmother's death. Her grandmother has to teach her that the pattern of life and death is woven just as that in the blanket and that no one can stop it without disturbing the pattern of everything.

Scott O'Dell's *Sing Down the Moon* paints a vivid contrast between the pastoral lives of the Navajo and their suffering at the hands of white soldiers on The Long Walk. The novel begins in the spring, as the Indian women watch over their flocks and the lambs

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are born and the men begin to plant the corn and melons. But the people must abandon their flocks and their crops are destroyed when they are forced to walk to and then camp on the desolate plains around Fort Sumner. One shepherd, Bright Morning, with her crippled warrior husband and infant son, escapes and makes her way back to Canyon de Chelly. There they find some of her sheep have survived. The novel ends as Bright Morning breaks the spear her husband has made for her son and gently leads the boy to touch a newborn lamb.

Though it is based on an actual historical event, Sing Down the Moon follows the same cyclical pattern as the other novels; it begins and ends with the spring lambing season, shows the journey and the return to the home canyon, and presents finally, a rejection of the linear path of the conqueror for the timeless rhythms of the life of the shepherds in secluded Canyon de Chelly.

That these three novels which concern the timeless patterns of shepherding should all concern the life of the Navajo people is revealing of the attitudes of American authors about American Indians. Newbery authors who want to convey something about the Indian existence, even those such as O'Dell who set their novels in particular historic periods, often frame the novels in the timeless setting that frequently occurs in the pastoral romances. Grace Moon's The Runaway Papoose, about a small Pueblo girl, Ralph Hubbard's Queer Person, about a Plains Indian child who is deaf, and The Horsecatcher by Mari Sandoz about a Cheyenne boy, all are framed in this timeless world. The Indians in these novels live in a world largely untouched by white culture, where their values and the patterns of their existence are
stressed. Their lives revolve around the seasons, the cycles of hunting, or the cycles of the crops. It is as if the authors hope to explain an unchanging and timeless Indian culture to the children of the linear culture outside of it.

An interesting recent example of this creation of the "Indian experience" is Jamake Highwater's Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey. In Anpao, Highwater, a Blackfoot Indian, has created a linear plot, a quest by a young Indian, but through the plot he has woven stories from Native American culture including, for example, the tale of the ring in the prairie and that of the star husband. In this fantasy novel, as in the other novels about American Indians, Highwater tries to express what he considers to be basic Native American beliefs in the wholeness of experience and in the interdependence of people with nature, both circular patterns, through the device of the linear plot.

But beyond this timeless world, a further explanation for the number of sheep novels lies in the very nature of American pastoralism. The American ideal is located, as Leo Marx points out, somewhere in between the opposing forces of civilization and nature. American pastorals are much less likely to be concerned with a primitive eden than a civilized garden. Tuan's "middle landscape" bordered on the one side by the wilderness and on the other by the city is reflected most clearly in these novels about the shepherds and their sheep. The four remaining novels, Elizabeth Yates' Mountain Born, Joseph Krungold's ... And Now Miguel, Jack Schaefer's Old Ramon, and Ester
Wier's *The Loner*, clearly reflect this model of the middle landscape.

Elizabeth Yates' *Mountain Born* is the story of several seasons in the life of a sheep ranch; the year that seven year old Peter begins to mature and understand the life and responsibilities of a shepherd. The major events of the story are the major events in the life of the sheep from the lambing, to the move to other pastures, the tail docking, the sheep dip, the shearing, the grazing, and the deaths of the sheep through catastrophe as well as natural death.

Joseph Krumgold's *... And Now Miguel* is also a coming-of-age story in which Miguel Chavez is waiting for the day when he begins to be a man, when he will be allowed to go with the sheep into the mountain pastures.

Jack Schaefer's *Old Ramon* is a recounting of a summer that Ramon spends with Old Ramon and the sheep, learning the rituals of the life of the shepherd, the importance to him of his dog, and the ways of the enemies of the sheep.

Ester Wier's *The Loner* concerns a young boy, David, a lone migrant child who has run away, who spends a season learning the ways of the shepherd from a woman shepherd in the mountains of Montana.

These novels reflect Tuan's model because the cycle of sheep-raising is set so clearly in the middle landscape between the worlds of the city and the wilds and yet moves back and forth naturally between these extremes. Sheep and their shepherds spend a portion
of their lives on the farm or ranch, but at some point each year they retreat to the open range, the "wilderness" where the sheep are prey to wolves, coyotes, and bears, to the weather, and to injury from falls in more dangerous terrain.

And just as the shepherd is dependent on the wilderness to fatten the sheep and improve their wool, so he or she is dependent on the city where that wool is sold and exchanged for other necessities. Even in the traditional settings of the Navajo novels the shepherd is not self-sufficient but relies on the "city" in the form of a trading post for goods that cannot be produced.

There is another sense in which these novels lie in the pastoral world between town and wilderness. This is because of the nature of the sheep themselves. Sheep are particularly domestic animals which depend upon human beings for their survival. They live in the animal world, and yet they cannot exist successfully without people to shepherd and protect them. They are pastoral creatures in that they lie so squarely in the world of people in rural settings, dependent on them for survival in the wilderness and upon the resources of the town for their health and prosperity. This dependency plays an important role in all of the novels.

The Role of Animals in the Sheep Novels

In some of the novels this dependency is because the sheep are so unintelligent. Old Ramon begins with the sentence: "There is no other
animal so stupid as the sheep."® Old Ramon tells young Ramon that sheep have some strange habits that may be throwbacks to a time when they weren't protected by people, if there ever was such a time. Unfortunately, the sheep may remember the habit but have forgotten why they do it or what to do in case of danger. Miguel describes the sheep in ... And Now Miguel:

Most of the time a ewe does not act like anything very much. It must be said, to begin with, that a ewe is not very smart. It knows to eat all the time which is good enough. But that's about all. When it looks at you it is with the eyes of someone who does not understand, absolutely, even one word that you are saying. Not that I think a sheep should understand words. It's just to explain what an empty look they go around with all the time.®

Boss, the woman shepherd in The Loner, feels as Old Ramon does that this is the fault of the shepherds themselves:

Dumb? They're not dumb. They're just about the most helpless creatures alive. They've lost their instinct to take care of themselves because they haven't had to. But it isn't their fault. It's men's. He's bred all the wild animal's independence and cunning out of them for his own gain, to have their meat and their wool with the least possible bother from them.®

This dependency means that the lives of the sheep and the shepherd are bound together. The shepherd is responsible for the

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sheep. The shepherd Benj says in Mountain Born, "I have them always in my mind. That's the shepherd's life - to remember his sheep."9

Boss says:

There isn't room for nonsense when you're taking care of sheep. Sheepherding is one of the hardest jobs in the world...in sheepherding you work every minute of every day and night...You give up everything to keep your sheep alive and in good shape...You take pride in doing it, and your first, last and only thought is for the sheep. You risk your life going after strays, and through blizzards, and fighting off animals who are always there, waiting for just one careless minute on your part.

And why do you do it? Because you're in charge of those sheep...And their lives depend on you! You live for them!10

Miguel says, describing the life of a shepherd, in ... And Now

Miguel:

And all that was left was the sheep and what they had to have. Like the sun they needed to keep warm. And the rain and the green grass to feed them. In the same way they needed someone to work and keep them all as a family together and healthy. They had nothing else except the sun and the rain and the grass and you.11

Living in this pastoral middle ground between the city and the wilds along with the shepherd and his flock is the sheepherder's dog. Dogs play crucial roles in all of these novels. A shepherd could not control the flock alone. The dog, trained so well that a mere flick of the shepherd's hand causes it to act, becomes an

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11Krumgold, op. cit., p. 52.
extension of the shepherd as a worker. In addition, it is the ears to defend the flock from predators, fighting off the enemy with the aid of the shepherd, and is the companion and friend to the shepherd. In all of the novels the sheep and the dog are contrasted in some way. The dog, while a domesticated animal too, is valued by the shepherd for its intelligence, its courage, and its companionship. The sheep are considered to be stupid, easily frightened, and not much company. Their value lies in what they can provide for the person who shepherds and protects them: their wool, their lambs, and later, their meat. The dog is an individual, a prized companion. The flock is a flock. While the shepherd professes to recognize each sheep (Old Ramon says it is through the "allness of the sheep", its shape, flesh, movements, ears, and tail\textsuperscript{12}), by and large for the shepherd, it is not the individual sheep which is important but the flock. "One sheep is nothing except as a part of something that is the flock."\textsuperscript{13}

Miguel in ... And Now Miguel says:

That is the real work of the pastor, my grandfather told me, "of a shepherd. To see that in all the flock there is no one that is alone by himself. Everyone together. Only so can all live."\textsuperscript{14}

The Pattern of Life in the Shepherding Novels

There is a beauty and balance to this life in the pastoral center. The true value of the life of the shepherd is in being at one with the

\textsuperscript{12}Schaefer, op. cit., p. 7.

\textsuperscript{13}ibid., p. 4.

\textsuperscript{14}Krumgold, op. cit., p. 52.
flock and with nature. Old Ramon feels that God's world is all around him: the sun, the stars, wind, mountains, grass, sheep, dogs, coyotes and owls are all company and a comfort. Yates' shepherd Benj, speaks of the "... Joys and hard work and deep satisfactions ...."15 of his life as a shepherd, in which:

... he loved his simple life unchanging greatly from day to day or year to year, except as the flock grew and new lambs replaced the old sheep, a life that bound him to the creatures in his care, and helped him to understand them.16

The threats to this sense of unity arise when the chief characters of this pastoral lifestyle do not perform as their lifestyle demands. Thus, the dangers can be within the eden, most commonly when the young shepherd does not obey the command to be ever-watchful and protective of the flock, or when an individual sheep becomes separated from the flock or when the dog is injured.

But these actions are only catapulted to the level of crisis when threats to the unity of the life of the shepherd and sheep come from without, particularly when they come from the wilderness. That is, most threats come when the sheep are set out to graze on wilderness land with only the shepherd and dog to protect them. Weir lists the dangers:

To look at it no one would believe the dangers that were always there. A blizzard in winter could be as deadly as an angry grizzly. Hungry coyotes could snatch the ewes out of the flock. Deadly weeds pushed up through the earth in springtime—the death

15Yates, op. cit., p. 56.
16Ibid., p. 69.
camas, the lupine, the larkspur which poisoned and killed the sheep. And the locoweed which drove them crazy....

Even the birds were a threat. The magpies stole rides on the ewes' backs, pecking at open wounds or pecking the eyes out of new lambs. The eagles could easily carry off a lamb or attack a full-grown sheep, killing it by striking it over and over again on the neck.17

These threats from the wilderness take two forms; storms and predators. The storm varies depending on the setting of the book, so that in Mountain Born and The Loner, it is snowstorms that place the sheep in peril and in Old Ramon it is a sandstorm. While the weather is pictured as an enemy, it is a more accepted one. Bad weather is a necessary drawback when one lives the robust, healthy life outdoors that is required of the shepherd. The shepherd's role is to try to keep the sheep from being overwhelmed by the forces of the weather. Old Ramon expresses what seems to be a common philosophy about the weather:

The wind is not angry. The wind is never angry. It is simply big and strong. Most of the time it is gentle and kind. And then once in a long while it remembers its bigness and its strength and is proud and wants to show them. It wants to try to sweep the whole world clean...I think it is talking to us now and the way that the wind talks is a shout. It is saying that it is sorry that we picked this day to cross the Jornada Seca because this is the day it has wanted to share its strength.18

The animal predators provide the most dramatic scenes in the novels. There are three predators of sheep: coyotes, wolves, and


18Schaefer, op. cit., p. 64.
bears. The coyotes appear in ... And Now Miguel and Old Ramon, both of which are set in the southwest. In ... And Now Miguel, the coyote is treated matter-of-factly as a predator: when it is seen, it is shot. There is respect for the coyote's skill: "They are smart and they are faster than a bird," but there is no forgiveness. Each coyote shot means a number of lambs saved. Old Ramon has some sense of the balance of the coyote in nature:

Ai, he is a nuisance and a thief and an insulter of good dogs. But he is Don Coyote. Ramon would miss him if he were gone... He is like a voice of the land and of the night over the land. He is not big but he is very clever.

Within the balance of nature the shepherd has some respect for the coyote. And the coyote has some respect for the shepherd as well: Boss says in The Loner: "Mean ornery critters, but they're smart. They've got a lot of respect for man though. That's why I lighted the fire. Fire to them means man." The bigger threat to the sheep, the one for which not even Old Ramon has much respect, is the wolf. It is more than a nuisance. Old Ramon kills one without compunction.

In Mountain Born, Elizabeth Yates, most clearly loses the wolf as a symbol of the wilderness threat, the untamed nature that is outside the pattern of pastoral nature. When wolves attack the sheep, Peter is depressed:

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19 Krumgold, op. cit., p. 8.
20 Schaefer, op. cit., pp. 75-76.
21 Wier, op. cit., p. 61.
Peter felt sad too as he thought of the cruel and bitter things that happened in the world, things that didn't need to happen and that upset the ordinary pattern of their days.\textsuperscript{22}

There are some things...that can't seem to live right with the rest of the world. They cause trouble to the good things and so they have to leave.\textsuperscript{23}

Killing a wolf is a deed that keeps the pattern smooth: "He had no heart for killing, but if it was to save life that was another matter."\textsuperscript{24} A wolf and its cubs must be killed, "To safeguard the farms in the valley, the flock in another summer ..."\textsuperscript{25}

In Old Ramon and The Loner the enemy is the bear. The image of the bear threatening the flocks goes back to the Bible, where in the story of David, the young shepherd fights off the lion and the bear which threaten the flock. Two of the sheep novels actually cite this Bible story as they talk of the flocks. In Yates' Mountain Born, Benj shares with Peter his role of safeguarder of the flocks and quotes the Bible: "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the flocks of Israel, whom thou hast defied." a quote from David, in which Benj uses the word "flocks" instead of "armies."\textsuperscript{26}

In The Loner, the boy actually names himself by opening the Bible to the story of David the shepherd.

\textsuperscript{22}Yates, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 62.
\textsuperscript{23}ibid., p. 83.
\textsuperscript{24}ibid., p. 63.
\textsuperscript{25}ibid., p. 76.
\textsuperscript{26}ibid., p. 77.
As well as being a Biblical symbol of the threat to the safety of the flock, the bear plays a symbolic role in American literature. From the tale of Davy Crockett killing the b'ar through the humorous frontier tales; from the works of Cooper to Faulkner's The Bear, this creature has come to represent the American wilderness. Pioneers who cleared the land for the agrarian farms to come had to confront and deal with this huge wild creature and to kill it before the lands could be settled. This symbol is as much at work in these sheep novels as is the symbol of the bear from the Bible.

This is supported by the fact that in both texts in which the bear appears it is not the sheep which are directly threatened. In both cases, the bear is a threat to the men and their dogs. It presents a threat to the lifestyle of the agrarian shepherd more than to his flocks. In The Loner, the son of the shepherd had confronted an old Grizzly in the woods and been killed. The shepherd admits that the bear does not bother the sheep unless one of them puts itself directly in the bear's path. And later in the novel this is what happens. The most adventurous of the sheep makes its way up the mountain away from the flock and is found and killed by the bear in its territory. The boy, David, like the biblical shepherd, confronts the bear with his dog and his gun. Like David, he feels "the anger of the weak against the strong..." He is like David attacking Goliath. The bear, as symbol of the wilderness, has confronted the

27Wier, op. cit., p. 144.
agrarian lifestyle. The shepherd has taken his weapon and defeated the wilderness.

In *Old Ramon* as well the bear does not attack the flocks. The old shepherd comes upon the bear when he is returning from a party. He and his dog manage to fight and kill the bear. In the process, the dog is almost killed. These two insiders, the shepherd and his dog, band together to fight off the threat from the outside, from the wilderness. The old shepherd sheds tears over his dog and nurses him back to health. The uniting of shepherd and dog as protectors of the "domesticated" ways of the middle landscape is thus assured in the killing of the bear.

The Middle Landscape

The novels about shepherding present a kind of middle ground between the pastoral romance and the pastoral novel as well. They provide the timeless feel of the romance in that the shepherding, no matter where or when it takes place, has a universality; the tasks of the shepherd, to protect his or her flock from the weather or predators, to feed them and to help them to grow are the same from one time period to another. And yet the shepherds are also firmly set in the pastoral tradition which recognizes the importance of the city. It is this market which allows the shepherd to continue the pastoral cycle. In addition, the shepherds and their sheep experience both the negative and positive aspects of the wilderness. They know its dangers, but they also experience its beauty and the peace which it can bring.
In these pastoral novels the shepherd is portrayed as having the best of all possible worlds: one in which one experiences the joys of the wilds, and the stimulation of pitting one's skills against the threats to one's flock; one has time for contemplation of one's existence, but one also has the advantages that come from an occupation that depends upon and enjoys the fruits of the marketplace. The city is available to the shepherd as it is needed, and on the shepherd's terms.

The sense of timelessness in most of the novels adds to the sense of unreality that makes them seem to be romance. Even references to an occasional truck or machine are played down so that the effect is of no particular period but probably of some time past. The emphasis is on traditional aspects of shepherding rather than on modern farming. Indeed in The Loner the author makes the point that modern farming is more like the business of the city than it is like the rural ideal. The loner is a wandering migrant child, without family, schooling, or money, who was forced to follow the crops to survive. He has witnessed, like many victims of the industrial age, the murderous effects of modern society: his best friend is killed when her long hair is caught in a picking machine. In contrast, when he finds Boss, he finds the same kind of caring that her flocks receive: "... home was a special place to a loner, to a bum lamb."28

In the sheep novels the various pastoral themes are woven together. But all are pastoral in their insistence on the life of the

28 ibid., p. 153.
middle landscape as the superior life. The image of the child as lamb is implied throughout the novels, as each young person is nurtured, protected and taught his or her role with the flocks. The traditional lifestyle of the shepherd-farmer is idealized. It is the life of the shepherd who knows his sheep intimately, who feels a sense of affinity with nature in its controlled state, who sees himself or herself as part of the cycle of life, just as the lambs and sheep are. In each book this pastoral lifestyle is depicted as the ultimate lifestyle. The protagonists have all the best of the American agrarian vision: they have their own land, and freedom, and time to philosophize on their role. They sit firmly in the American rural eden, that middle landscape which lies even now in children's fiction, somewhere between the troubles of the city and the threats of the wilderness.
CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Patterns of the Pastoral Novel

In the introductory chapter it was hypothesized that pastoral themes and ideas would appear in American novels for children because these novels are part of the mainstream of American literature wherein pastoralism has played an important role. It was also hypothesized that pastoral novels would encompass three basic ideas.

The first of these is that life in rural settings is better, easier, and more satisfying than life in urban settings. The sheer number of winners and honor books with rural settings indicates that, for the Newbery Medal juries at least, novels about the rural experience are more attractive. If one accepts Max Lerner's notion that small towns can be defined as "rural" as long as face-to-face relations between people are still possible, then the Newbery Medal novels are overwhelmingly rural. Only fifteen of the one

1Appendix C contains a list of the Newbery Medal winners and honor books with rural settings.

hundred fifteen Newbery award winners or honor books are set in cities or urban areas. And it appears that books with rural settings continue to be popular with the committees, for in the past ten years fifteen of the twenty-five winners and honor books set in the United States are placed in rural settings.

While this indicates that rural life may be perceived to be better, life in the rural landscape is not necessarily easier. Backbreaking labor, ravages of weather and climate, the loss of crops, the tedious chores of rural existence, and the near presence of death are commonplace in the pastoral novels. But this hardship is part of the essential pattern of the pastoral novel. The pattern emphasizes the rhythms of life. The pastoral romances and novels of the wilderness are marked by the events of the natural year. While the pioneer farmer's tasks differ from those of the solitary hero of the wilderness or the romantic hero enjoying the pastoral life, each takes his or her lead from the pattern of nature and the seasons. In the novels about the frontier experience, and some of the novels about the shepherds, the patterns of life are both circular and linear. The life of these people moves in keeping with the seasons, with clearing, planting and the harvest following each other naturally through the course of the year; but it also

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3 Appendix D contains a list of the Newbery Medal winners and honor books with urban settings.

4 See Appendix C.
moves forward, with each new clearing beginning again the process of transforming the wilderness into the city. In all the novels, hard work brings its own rewards, the seasons progress inevitably from harsh winter to gentle reviving spring, and death is always balanced by new life. This harmonic balance in the pattern of life is what seems to make rural life easier: work upon the land makes the awareness of the patterns and balances of life daily apparent.

Belief in the superiority of rural life is manifested differently in the two forms of the pastoral novel. In the pastoral novel itself, a life lived close to nature has clear benefits, providing sustenance, philosophical closeness to the simple rhythms of life, and serenity. But in spite of these riches, the pastoral hero recognizes that the world of the city and of technology, while perhaps not as sane, or as healthy or innocent, will inevitably replace the rural world. In the pastoral romance, the sense of the superiority of rural life is absolute. The hero openly rejects the city for the country or never experiences the city at all.

The second of the three hypotheses is that life on the small farm is the best life. Forty of the novels set in the rural United States are set on small farms or ranches. All twentyeight novels set on the frontier are centered around the experience of the yeoman farmer. The other novels with farm settings are most commonly pastoral romances. The farm setting allows for a structure of

5ibid.
activities based on the pattern of the seasons. Frequently, these farm pastorals have a timeless quality even on the frontier, as if the day-in, day-out cycle of activities on the farm has a kind of eternal truth, particularly when compared to the linear rush for progress of the city. The novels about sheep-herding support this because, as Elizabeth Yates says, there is a kind of timeless universality to the practice of raising sheep.6

Life on the farm also supports the conviction that runs throughout the pastoral novels, that family life is superior to the life of the loner. The loner is not a typical figure in the pastoral. Even young people who spend time alone in the wilderness choose to return to the comforts of the family.

One might expect a reduction in the number of novels concerned with small farm life in more recent years, particularly when the 1970 census indicated that only 2.9 percent of the population worked in farm occupations, but in the past ten years six of the twenty-five novels with American settings have been centered around small farm life.7 However, the modern novels set on the farm contain elements that did not previously appear in the pastorals. Two of these are


particularly revealing of new influences on the pastoral attitudes of contemporary authors of novels for children.

Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is set on the small farm owned by a black family during the Depression. The Logans are determined above all things to hold onto their farm and to keep their family together. Like other Americans from Henry David Thoreau to Sam Gribley in *My Side of the Mountain*, the Logans also have the forest. A small forest stands at the edge of their farm, to which family members go for comfort in times of sorrow and for a sense of peace in times of trial. Their greatest sorrow is that they were once persuaded to sell off a piece of this wilderness for the lumber.

The book is set on a small farm on the edge of a piece of wilderness, but it is far from being a pastoral romance. The night riders come, several neighbors' homes are burned, and all of the black families suffer humiliation at the hands of white people. The farm cannot save the family from this oppression. Although the farm provides no easy answers for the Logans, the book still presents some pastoral values. As in the novels of the frontier, survival of the human spirit in this book calls for passionate struggle, and this struggle is made somewhat easier when one has a loving family, is close to nature, and lives a life caught up with the cycles of the land.

Robert O'Brien's fantasy, *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*, also reveals these more contemporary attitudes which have entered the pastoral world of children's literature. The rats of NIMH were captured in their city neighborhood and taken to the National
Institute of Mental Health where they were part of an experiment which increased their intelligence. They have managed to escape the laboratory and have found a retreat under a rosebush on a farm in the country. But the forces of technology in the form of the laboratory team are searching for them and coming ever nearer. Like the frontier farmers, when these city folk head toward the country the city inevitably follows them. Still, with the help of Mrs. Frisby, a farm mouse, they are able to realize their dream. The dream of the rats of NIMH like that of so many Americans before them, is to head into the wilderness (in this case, the local forest preserve) to start over again. These citified and highly intelligent rats are going into the wilderness to become farmers in the hidden glen carved out among the trees. The agrarian ideal lives on in this contemporary fantasy. Like the pioneers the rats come from the city, bringing with them their knowledge of the city and retreat into the wilderness, with the city never far behind.

Nostalgia in the Pastoral Novel

The third hypothesis is that the pastoral novels indicate that life in past times held more promise, was more self-sufficient and more rewarding than life in the present. This kind of "pastoral of the past" is indicative of a nostalgic sense of "loss of innocence," which can mean the loss of innocence in the life of a nation, or in an individual's own life. Natalie Babbitt, a Newbery Award winner, describes America as experiencing the first of these:

... the end of the endless frontier, the declining wealth of the land, wars where no one has been successful, these experiences have left her standing
on the brink of maturity, all innocence gone and
nothing of the old zest left - only a clear and
wistful memory of the glory of the good old days
when anything was possible.8

In his poem, "Directive," Robert Frost describes it:

Back out of all this now too much for us,
Back in a time made simple by the loss
Of detail, burned, dissolved and broken off
Like graveyard marble sculpture in the weather...9

The sixty-two novels set in the past reveal both types of
pastoral nostalgia for the loss of innocence. Not all of the novels
with historical settings are automatically pastoral and no attempt
has been made in this paper to establish that any novel which is set
in the past is, of necessity, pastoral. However, a great number of
those novels set in the past are often also designed as pastorals,
being set in rural areas, with close families, and lives lived close
to the land. Often the nostalgia is focused on periods of American
history when ideals and principles were being defined and defended,
with the greatest number of novels concerning the era of the colonies,
the Revolutionary War, the Civil War and the frontier experience.

The second form of nostalgic pastoral expresses a longing for
the lost innocence of one's own childhood. William Empson feels that
the Victorians particularly emphasized this longing for their own
personal time of innocence. Newbery Award winner E.L. Konigsburg
says this:

8Natalie Babbitt, "The Great American Novel for Children - and

by John F. Lynen (New Haven, Ch.: Yale University Press, 1960),
p. 190.
It seems to me that people who profess to love children really love childhood, and, what's more, I think, they really love only one childhood, their own - and only one aspect of it, called innocence.10

Often the nostalgia for one's own childhood and the pastoral nostalgia for a simpler historic time are combined in the pastorals for children. American authors Laura Ingalls Wilder and Carol Ryrie Brink for example, as shown in this paper, expressed the idea that the historical conditions in which they had spent their childhoods were irretrievably lost. The innocence lost is both the author's own and that of the nation as well. Natalie Babbitt feels that writers for children often write to preserve this past time, to share the innocence of their own past with children:

American childhood is the last repository of the American dream, from which we must wake up after puberty; and we guard it as jealously as we guard our high-school yearbooks. We do this for ourselves, not for our children since we know perfectly well that we are ensuring for them their own crashing disappointments. But we must see childhood as a time of flawless happiness because that way we have a refuge for our own phantasies (sic).11

Linda Levstik adds that children's literature is often the "last refuge in which society preserves for children all that is moral and good but too unsophisticated for adult taste."12


11 Babbitt, op. cit., p. 181.

Eighteen of the historical novels are set in the time period of the author's childhood rather than in the present. This kind of writing, again, is not necessarily pastoral. As Jean Karl has pointed out in From Childhood to Childhood, good authors for children often write out of their own childhood experiences, which remain for them vividly alive.13 It is not surprising that not only the experiences but the actual settings of these experiences should be portrayed in award-winning fiction.

While for some authors childhood was not a golden age of innocence but a hard and desperate struggle to grow up, for the pastoral novelist, childhood which like Laura Ingalls Wilder's had its own share of hardships, was nonetheless a golden time. In the pastoral, the difficulties of life are always balanced with its joys. The pastoral for children revolves around the security and pleasure that are brought about through caring human relationships particularly in the family. Juvenile pastoral heroes of the frontier, of the wilderness, or in the romance rely upon and gain strength from their relationships with others. They cannot and do not remain isolated.

In the past ten years, this third hypothesis, that the pastoral perceives life in the past as better than the present has been the one most questioned by the writers for children. In the movement

known as the "New Realism" in children's literature many contemporary novels have explored both individual and national history with a harsher eye. History is no longer necessarily the repository of the best. In the nineteen seventies the Newbery Medal was given to the Colliers' *My Brother Sam is Dead*, a less than positive look at the American Revolution, Paula Fox's *The Slave Dancer*, a novel about the brutality of the slave trade, and Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, a story concerned with racial violence during the Depression. As well, in many of the current novels childhood is no longer such a golden time, free of care, as evidenced by Paterson's *The Great Gilly Hopkins* and Jacob Have I Loved. However, to balance these harsher views of children's lives the committee did award the Newbery Medal to two entirely pastoral views of the frontier, Allan Eckart's *Incident at Hawk's Hill* and Joan Blos' *A Gathering of Days*. Perhaps the frontier is the last stronghold of the nostalgia for a stronger, simpler American past.

The American pastoral vision has clearly taken two distinct forms in the pastoral novel for children. In the novels of the frontier experience, in a number of novels about the wilderness experience, and in novels about shepherds, Tuan's three-fold model of agrarian society clearly dominates. In the bulk of the novels, the pastoral ideal is the farm, ranch, or small town, that "middle landscape" which lies between the opposing forces of civilization and wild nature. But the dwellers in this middle landscape are tied firmly both to the life of the wilderness which provides for
their needs for game, timber, land, forage, or periods of reflection, and also to the life of the city which provides their education, their values, and technological support.

The pastoral romance on the other hand follows the two-fold model presented by Tuan in which the city and nature are totally at odds. In these, life in the country is either chosen deliberately over the life of the city, or idealized with no reference made to the city at all.

What makes both of these forms so much a part of the American experience is that they express the kind of conflicts inherent in the American pastoral vision. Vernon Louis Parrington has stated that these conflicts arose when dispersion, movement, democracy, individualism, and the frontier rapidly gave way to industrialization, collectivity, urbanization, and impersonality. Richard Chase feels that the American novel has been shaped not by the harmonies in our American culture, but by these contradictions. Conflicts between past and future orientations and between traditional ways and "progressive" ones, those circular and linear patterns of the pastoral, are basic dilemmas of the American culture. Leo Marx maintains that the basic conflict in American literature is between a pastoral vision and a belief in an idealized future in which


technology is the benevolent protector of the good life. Daniel Hoffman says that American fiction attempts to deal with conflicts between nature and civilization, and between eden and the spoliation of paradise, and these too are the basis of the themes in pastorals. All of these conflicts are reflected in the two forms of pastoral novels for children, which attempt to deal with the issues of past and future, tradition and progress, wild nature and civilization, and city and country.

The pastoral novel and the pastoral romance both idealize the rural, the agrarian, and the past America, while differing in their attitudes toward them. In the pastoral novel, the author admits the longing for a simpler place or a time, either personal or historical, when things seemed better, but, even so, accepts the future and moves on. In the pastoral romance, the author renounces ties to the more complex world and the future, returning to the past and moving to the country, serenely happy and seemingly unaware of the problems of modern life.

The pastoral novel for children takes different forms but within these various forms several images recur. There is the lone pastoral hero, always, inevitably making his or her way back to family and society. With this hero travel the domesticated beasts


which are helpmates in accomplishing the pastoral tasks: the dogs, horses, and the sheep. Around the hero is the wilderness, that unknown quantity, sometimes dangerous, a factor to be tamed or subdued, and sometimes a refuge. In the wilderness are the beasts: the bears and wolves and owls which seem to symbolize all that the hero must overcome. And with them too is the Indian, sometimes savage, in need of subduing just as the land must be tamed, sometimes transcendent, noble and eternal, and yet too often lost and gone. And through all of the novels stands the land and its patterns with the days and seasons moving ceaselessly in their rhythms from one pastoral year to the next. The solitary heroes who become part of families, the loners who take to society, the beasts and wilds and native Americans who must be tamed and then be mourned, and with them all the ceaseless eternal pattern of life, these are all part of the conflicts and yet also of the healing which takes place in the American pastoral novel for children.

In summary, the following five conclusions can be stated about pastoralism and pastoral themes in American children's literature:

1. The Newbery Medal selections indicate that pastoral values and forms are clearly represented in the American novels for children.

2. That pastoral novels for children often reflect a nostalgia for simpler times and places which is both a general cultural nostalgia and also particular to the literature for children.
3. That novels of pastoral romance are often a nostalgic appeal to the wisdom and innocence of the child, and an indication of a desire to present to the child images of a more perfect world.

4. That novels of pastoral irony admit to the child the less than perfect world and attempt to present an image of the simpler, better pastoral life in relation to this less than perfect one.

5. That pastoral novels for children attempt to deal with the basic conflicts in American attitudes toward rural and urban life, progress, and the wilderness, including American attitudes about wild creatures, nature, and about Native Americans through either pastoral irony or pastoral romance.

The Future of Pastoralism and Suggestions for Further Study

The American pastoral novel for children can be seen as part of two converging pastoral traditions, one in which there is a general nostalgia for better simpler forms of existence or times, such as is exhibited in the novels about rustics, and one in which there is a more specific nostalgia of adults for their own personal "simpler time" that is, their own childhoods.

Children's literature reflects the culture in which it is produced. John Rowe Townsend says that the whole atmosphere of a society forms attitudes, and if "historical precedents hold good, children's books by and large reflect those attitudes, they do not
form them."¹⁸ Linda Levstik reiterates this, "Stories for children do not appear in a vacuum. They are a reflection not only of the mind of their author, but of the publishers who choose to print them and the society that purchases and reads them."¹⁹ R. Gordon Kelly feels that children's literature is a particularly good reflector of culture:

... children's literature is significant and illuminating for the cultural historian because it constitutes one important way in which the adult community deliberately and self-consciously seeks to explain, interpret and justify the body of beliefs, values, attitudes and practices which, taken together, define in large measure a culture - that is, a distinctive way of life.²⁰

This paper has been an attempt to examine what these pastoral novels for children say about American values and culture. Like the forms of the pastoral itself, two qualities of nostalgia are at work in the pastoral novels for children. The first of these is the pastoral nostalgia for a better, simpler life in a rural setting. There is abundant evidence that the United States has retained many of its "rural" attitudes and values in spite of its metropolitan and industrialized culture. The pastoral longing for a rural lifestyle, the feeling that the lives of farmers are somehow healthier


¹⁹Levstik, op. cit.

and saner than those of people in the city, the sense that somehow the past was heartier and truer than the present and that "country" people are somehow closer to the values of a "real" America is manifested in many forms. Our twentieth century presidents have, by and large, taken care to establish their rural credentials from Teddy Roosevelt, the wilderness tamer, to the city-bred, intellectual Calvin Coolidge who posed for pictures forking hay onto a haystack in his spats and white shirt. More recently Jimmy Carter in L.L. Bean flannels and fishing gear, and Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan in cowboy boots have continued this style. The popularity of such television programs as "The Little House on the Prairie" and "The Waltons" reveals this nostalgia for simpler times, and hard work, and loving families. The back-to-the land movement of the sixties, the revival of interest in folk art and craft, folk music and folk medicine, the flight to the suburbs, city gardens, backpacking and river rafting are various manifestations of this cultural phenomenon. In this context it is not surprising that pastoral ideas play such an important role in American literature for children. The panels of individuals who come together each year to select the "most distinctive contribution to literature for children" reflect the national cultural values when they select pastoral novels. An additional study which examines the Caldecott Medal winners and honor books (those picture books selected for their distinctive contribution to American literature) might serve to support this conclusion. Selected examples such as Virginia
Burton's pastoral romance of The Little House, Donald Hall's linear farm pastoral, The Ox-Cart Man, and Maurice Sendak's wilderness romance, Where the Wild Things Are, indicate that this might prove to be a valuable follow-up study.

However, as Phillipe Aries suggests in Centuries of Childhood, literature for children, as part of a whole network of cultural artifacts deliberately created for them, changes as society's attitudes toward children change. Since the second aspect of pastoral is more specific nostalgia for childhood innocence, current societal trends may indicate that pastoral literature for children will decline or change in the near future. Peter Marinelli points out that we may be entering a "post-Arcadian" phase in our attitude toward the child. He notes the conception of the child as inherently evil in Richard Hughes' High Wind in Jamaica and in William Golding's Lord of the Flies as evidence that this less innocent child has been on the literary scene for some time.

The difficulty of sheltering modern children from knowledge of life's problems, coupled with a more pessimistic view of society in general, has resulted in the past fifteen years in a virtual flood of books for children which have come to be known as "The New Realism." Betty Brett has described these novels as ones which emphasize a pessimistic view of the world, with social problems

overburdening plot and with alienation and disintegration of the
family and the necessity for the individual child to deal with a
difficult fate alone as a common theme in many of them.

While the Newbery Awards continue to go to pastoral novels as
often as not, there are evidences that the pastoral idyll for chil-
dren may be waning. Certainly the new looks at history mentioned
earlier are indications of a change of attitude on the part of the
juries about what children can and ought to understand about the
past. In a number of the recent winners either the happy pastoral
family does not exist or, perhaps even more horrifying, does exist
but cannot protect the child from the terrors and uncertainties of
life. Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, M.C. Higgins the Great, and
Sounder all contain close loving families who cannot protect their
children from violence, fear or prejudice. Virginia Hamilton's The
Planet of Junior Brown, a novel of two boys from broken families,
provides a striking contrast to the pastoral vision of life in which
security, sanity, and happiness are linked to the family, the country
and the patterns of nature. Junior Brown and his friend Buddy live
in New York City. They are social outcasts, adopted informally by
their eccentric former science teacher, now the school custodian.
The three spend their most pleasant hours in a dark secret closet in
the school basement watching a model of the solar system as it
slowly revolves. This solar system is their own "pastoral vision"
in a world which cares little for them, a continuing reminder to
this created "family" of the continuity and balance of a natural world
of which they as lost city people have little experience.
Because of this shift in attitude about the child and about what the child needs to know of the world, it is possible that the pastoral in children's books will change in the future. Certainly it appears that the novels of nostalgic irony, which admit the death of the wilderness, the wild animals, and the Native people of the land; those novels which mourn it but accept it, have been the more popular of the two forms of pastoral in the last fifteen years. The greatest number of pastoral romances were published in the nineteen forties and nineteen fifties. There were none published in the sixties and only two in the seventies.\textsuperscript{22} A follow-up study of the award winning books in the remaining years of the century might indicate more clearly whether the pastoral romance is dead or merely temporarily out of fashion.

It may be that the New Realism is merely a fashion and that the pastoral values which Americans have held for so long will simply take another form in the future. It is difficult to tell whether the selections by these juries are made because of changed cultural values about America or in terms of a changing attitude toward children. The Newbery Medal novels were deliberately chosen for this study in the expectation that they would reveal American cultural values most clearly because they are selected to represent the best in American children's literature. But they also represent

\textsuperscript{22}Of the 22 romances used in this paper, one appeared in the 20's, 5 in the 30's, 7 each in the 40's and 50's, none in the 60's, and 2 in the 70's.
what the juries feel is the best for children. The juries for this award are made up of professionals who are tied to the world of children's literature namely, librarians, teachers, professors and critics of the literature. It is possible that the juries may reveal in their selections the cultural values and expectations of this limited community within the population, a community which is immersed in and involved in the rhetoric of the New Realism, more than they reveal the values of the American culture at large. A study which looked at books which did not win awards, perhaps top-sellers, or selected samples of books published for children for a selection of time periods, might reveal whether pastoralism is as widespread in American children's books as it appears to be from the selections for the Newbery Awards.

One of the most frequent comments in contemporary critical articles is the bias toward "the city", particularly New York City, as a setting for realistic novels.23 Certainly the Newbery Medal books do not reflect this bias. A cross section of published books in a given time period might reveal whether this attitude is an unfounded fear on the part of the "pastoral" critics or a reality which Newbery panels have tended to ignore.

Several examples of fantasy novels were used in this paper because they so clearly contained pastoral themes. Fantasy novels have

continued to be popular with the Newbery Medal committees in spite of
the rise of the New Realism. In the past ten years eleven fantasy
novels have been honored. Of these, four are set in the United
States and all four of these reflect pastoral themes and values.24
Eleanor Cameron has called fantasy a "country of the mind."25 With
the pastoral romances seeming to die out in popularity with the
award committees, it is conceivable that this fantasy pastoral land­
scape, this country of the mind, is beginning to replace the American
rural landscape of the pastoral romance. An evaluation of a selec­
tion of contemporary American fantasy novels for children might re­
veal whether or not pastoral attitudes, while no longer acceptable
in the New Realistic children's fiction, are still at home in the
fantasy novel.

No novel for children can be evaluated only in the cultural
context. Beyond the context of these novels lies their audience.
While it is true that children's literature may seem to be dominated
by adults (adults who write the novels, who edit them, select them
for publication, and then select them again for libraries, classrooms
and for individual children, review them and then select them for
recognition with awards), in the end it is the child readers who

24 These include O'Brien's Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH,
Steig's Abel's Island, Highwater's Anpao and Langton's The Fledgling.

25 Eleanor Cameron, The Green and Burning Tree: On the Writing
and Enjoyment of Children's Books (Boston: Little, Brown and
determine, through their selection of novels to read and through the ideas they gain from them, what lasting effects the literature will have.

What has been stressed in this study has been what the values in these novels indicate about American cultural beliefs. What remains to be considered is what children perceive about the values in the novels. Newbery Medal winners are often afforded a share of posterity not given to most children's novels, staying in print long after they cease to be read by children, if indeed they ever were read by children. If these novels are repositories of the values of our culture, what we think about our country and what we want for our children, another consideration must be what children garner of these values when and if they read the books.

From informal preference studies, reader surveys and circulation records from libraries, researchers have gained some basic information about which of the Newbery Award winners have remained popular. Norma Schlager has suggested that children read those Newbery winners which are most closely related to the problems and decisions they are confronting in the particular stage of development through which they are going. However, there is little evidence as to whether pastoral themes and values play a role in this kind of selection. The novels by Laura Ingalls Wilder have remained

popular for forty years while other novels of the pioneer experience on the frontier have not. *Charlotte's Web* is considered a classic while other pastoral romances are seldom read. Are these selections popular because the adult world plays such a strong role in the choices made by children? Or is there some common cord that connects the popular pastoral works which makes them special for children? Only recently have we solicited the responses of children about the reading selections they have made. This kind of study might prove valuable in discovering more about the transmission of pastoral ideas from one generation to another. A study in which children talked about books which they had chosen to read or not chosen to read, books which they have not enjoyed, and what they have liked and disliked in the various forms of the pastorals would be interesting. Even more revealing would be a study which attempted to determine whether children were aware of and attracted to the pastoral ideas and attitudes in the books that they read. This kind of study would be helpful in discovering whether or not children are consciously aware of pastoral ideas, whether they hold these ideas already and find re-inforcement for them in reading, or if they seem to be absorbed unconsciously through their reading as just a small part of the whole pastoral context of American culture.

Like so many of the pastoral authors for children, the critics seem to feel that we may be at the end of an era, that the golden age of childhood may be over. Perhaps the most meaningful way to examine the truth of that statement is to listen to the responses of children to the novels which express the pastoral ideals.
In summary, the following suggestions have been offered for further study:

1. A parallel study of the Caldecott Medal books, selected for the most distinguished contribution to picture books for children to see if they, too, reflect pastoral values, themes, and forms.

2. A follow-up study of Newbery Medal winners and honor books to be done at the end of the decade and again at the end of the century to indicate whether both types of pastoral novels are still being published, whether pastoral irony dominates the award-winning books, or whether pastoralism is no longer a popular form in the novels.

3. A study of a random selection of books published for children to determine whether Newbery Medal juries tend to select a greater percentage of pastoral novels for the awards than are published. The study would also reveal whether the modern "city" novel is as predominant as some of the critics feel that it is, and whether use of historical settings, rural settings, and small farms are as popular in the mainstream of children's literature as they are in the Newbery Medal juries.

4. An evaluation of contemporary American fantasy novels for children to explore if and how they present pastoral ideas.

5. A study of children's responses to pastoral novels to attempt to discover what appeals to children about these
novels, and what, if any pastoral values they absorb from their reading of them.
### APPENDIX A

**NEWBERY WINNERS AND HONOR BOOKS SET IN THE UNITED STATES**

Newbery Medal winners have been designated by an N

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author 1</th>
<th>Author 2</th>
<th>Title Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>W. Bowen</td>
<td>C. Meigs</td>
<td>The Old Tobacco Shop, Windy Hill</td>
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<td>1927</td>
<td>W. James</td>
<td></td>
<td>Smoky, The Cowhorse N</td>
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<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>C. Snedeker</td>
<td></td>
<td>Downright Dencey</td>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>C. Meigs</td>
<td>C. Moon</td>
<td>Clearing Weather, Runaway Papoose</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>A. Field</td>
<td>F. McNeely</td>
<td>Hitty N, The Jumping Off Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>R. Hubbard</td>
<td>E. Gray</td>
<td>Queer Person, Meggy Macintosh</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>L. Armer</td>
<td>R. Field</td>
<td>Waterless Mountain N, Calico Bush</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M. Allee</td>
<td>Jane's Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>C. Meigs</td>
<td>H. Swift</td>
<td>Swift Rivers, The Railroad to Freedom</td>
</tr>
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<td>1934</td>
<td>E. Singmaster</td>
<td>S. Schmidt</td>
<td>Swords of Steel, New Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>C. Brink</td>
<td>P. Stong</td>
<td>Caddie Woodlawn N, Honk the Moose</td>
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<td>1937</td>
<td>K. Sawyer</td>
<td>L. Lenski</td>
<td>Roller Skates N, Phoebe Fairchild, Her Book</td>
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<td></td>
<td>L. Bianco</td>
<td></td>
<td>Winterbound</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>A. Hewes</td>
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<td>The Codfish Musket</td>
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<td>1938</td>
<td>M. Robinson</td>
<td>L. Wilder</td>
<td>Bright Island, On the Banks of Plum Creek</td>
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178
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<td>F. Atwater</td>
<td>Mr. Popper's Penguins</td>
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<td>P. Crawford</td>
<td>Hello the Boat</td>
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<td>1940</td>
<td>L. Wilder</td>
<td>By the Shores of Silver Lake</td>
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<td>S. Meader</td>
<td>Boy with a Pack</td>
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<td>1941</td>
<td>D. Gates</td>
<td>Blue Willow</td>
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<td>L. Wilder</td>
<td>The Long Winter</td>
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<td>1942</td>
<td>W. Edmonds</td>
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<td>Little Town on the Prairie</td>
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<td>Johnny Tremain N</td>
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<td>L. Wilder</td>
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<td>Miss Hickory N</td>
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<td>N. Barnes</td>
<td>The Wonderful Year</td>
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<td>The Heavenly Tenants</td>
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<td>Kildee House</td>
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<td>W. Havignurst</td>
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<td>J. Sauer</td>
<td>Light at Tern Rock</td>
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<td>1953</td>
<td>E. White</td>
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<td>S. O'Dell</td>
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<td>Across Five Aprils</td>
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<td>M. Stolz</td>
<td>Noonday Friends</td>
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<td>I. Hunt</td>
<td>Up A Road Slowly N</td>
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<td>S. O'Dell</td>
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<td>E. Konigsburg</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Z. Snyder</td>
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<td>1970</td>
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<td>S. Ish-Kishor</td>
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<td>S. O'Dell</td>
<td>Sing Down the Moon</td>
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<td>1975</td>
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<td>M.C. Higgins the Great N</td>
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<td></td>
<td>J. Collier</td>
<td>My Brother Sam is Dead</td>
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<td>B. Greene</td>
<td>Philip Hall Likes Me I Reckon Maybe</td>
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<td>L. Yep</td>
<td>Dragonwings</td>
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<td>B. Cleary</td>
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<td>The Great Gilly Hopkins</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>S. Blos</td>
<td>A Gathering of Days N</td>
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<td>1981</td>
<td>K. Paterson</td>
<td>Jacob Have I Loved N</td>
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<td>J. Langton</td>
<td>The Fledgling</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. L'Engle</td>
<td>A Ring of Endless Light</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX B

NOVELS SET IN THE PAST

Novels are arranged in chronological order by year of award. Newbery Medal winners have been designated by an N.

1922 Bowen, William The Old Tobacco Shop
    Meigs, Cornelia Windy Hill

1928 Snedecker, Caroline Downright Dency

1929 Meigs, Cornelia Clearing Weather

1930 Field, Rachel Hitty, Her First Hundred Years N
    McNeely, Marion Hurd The Jumping-Off Place

1931 Gray, Elizabeth Janet Meggy McIntosh: A Highland Girl in the Carolina Colony
    Hubbard, Ralph Queer Person

1932 Field, Rachael The Calico Bush

1933 Meigs, Cornelia Swift Rivers
    Swift, Hildegarde Hoyt The Railroad to Freedom: A Story of the Civil War

1934 Singmaster, Elsie Swords of Steel: The Story of a Gettysburg Boy
    Schmidt, Sarah Lindsay The New Land: A Novel for Boys and Girls

1936 Brink, Carol Ryrie Caddie Woodlawn

1937 Sawyer, Ruth Roiler Skates N
    Hewes, Agnes Donforth The Codfish Market
    Lenski, Lois Pheobe Fairchild, Her Book

1938 Wilder, Laura Ingalls On the Banks of Plum Creek

1939 Crawford, Phyllis "Hello the Boat!"

1940 Meader, Stephen Boy with a Pack
    Wilder, Laura Ingalls By The Shores of Silver Lake
<table>
<thead>
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<td>Wilder, Laura</td>
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<td>Edmunds, Walter D.</td>
<td><em>The Matchlock Gun</em></td>
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<td>Gaggin, E.R.</td>
<td><em>Down by the Water</em></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Lenski, Lois</td>
<td><em>Indian Captive</em></td>
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<td>Wilder, Laura</td>
<td><em>Little Town on the Prairie</em></td>
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<td>Estes, Eleanor</td>
<td><em>The Middle Moffat</em></td>
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<td>Forbes, Esther</td>
<td><em>Johnny Tremain</em></td>
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<td>Estes, Eleanor</td>
<td><em>Rufus M</em></td>
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<td>Wilder, Laura</td>
<td><em>These Happy Golden Years</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dalgleish, Alice</td>
<td><em>The Silver Pencil</em></td>
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<td>1946</td>
<td>Lenski, Lois</td>
<td><em>Strawberry Girl</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Henry, Marguerite</td>
<td><em>Justin Morgan Had a Horse</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Barnes, Nancy</td>
<td><em>The Wonderful Year</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Caudill, Rebecca</td>
<td><em>Tree of Freedom</em></td>
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<td>Coblentz, Catherine</td>
<td><em>The Blue Cat of Castle Town</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Havighurst, Walter and Marion</td>
<td><em>Song of the Pines: A Story of Norwegian lumbering in Wisconsin</em></td>
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<td>1950</td>
<td>Lindquist, Jennie D.</td>
<td><em>The Golden Name Day</em></td>
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<td>Estes, Eleanor</td>
<td><em>Ginger Pye</em></td>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>Dalgleish, Alice</td>
<td><em>The Bear on Hemlock Mountain</em></td>
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<td>McGraw, Eloise Jarvis</td>
<td><em>Moccasin Trail</em></td>
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<td>1953</td>
<td>Daigleish, Alice</td>
<td><em>The Courage of Sarah Noble</em></td>
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<td>1955</td>
<td>Lindquist, Jennie D.</td>
<td><em>The Golden Name Day</em></td>
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<td>Lipson, Fred</td>
<td><em>Ola Yeller</em></td>
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<td>1958</td>
<td>Keith, Harold</td>
<td><em>Rifles for Watie</em></td>
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<td>Lawson, Robert</td>
<td><em>The Great Wheel</em></td>
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<td>Sandoz, Mari</td>
<td><em>The Horsecatcher</em></td>
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<td>Speare, Elizabeth George</td>
<td><em>The Witch of Blackbird Pond</em></td>
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<td>Steele, William O.</td>
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<td>1961</td>
<td>O'Dell, Scott</td>
<td><em>Island of the Blue Dolphins</em></td>
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<td>Schaefer, Jack</td>
<td><em>Old Ramon</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Hunt, Irene</td>
<td><em>Across Five Aprils</em></td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<td>1967</td>
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<td>The King's Fifth</td>
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<td>Ish-Kishor, Sulamith</td>
<td>Our Eddie</td>
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<td>1971</td>
<td>O'Dell, Scott</td>
<td>Sing Down the Moon</td>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>Eckert, Allan W.</td>
<td>Incident at Hawk's Hill</td>
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<td>1974</td>
<td>Fox, Paula</td>
<td>The Slave Dancer</td>
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<td>1975</td>
<td>Collier, James Lincoln and Christopher</td>
<td>My Brother Sam is Dead</td>
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<td>1976</td>
<td>Yep, Lawrence</td>
<td>Dragonwings</td>
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<td>1977</td>
<td>Taylor, Mildred</td>
<td>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>Blos, Joan</td>
<td>A Gathering of Days</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Paterson, Katherine</td>
<td>Jacob Have I Loved</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX C

NOVELS WITH RURAL SETTINGS

Newbery Medal winners have been designated by an N. Novels set on farms or ranches have been designated by an *.

1922  Meigs, Cornelia  *Windy Hill
1922  James, Will  *Smoky, the Cowhorse
1929  Moon, Grace  The Runaway Papoose
1930  Field, Rachel  Hitty N
  McNeely, Marian Hurd  *The Jumping-Off Place
1931  Hubbard, Ralph  *Queer Person
1932  Amer, Laura Adams  Waterless Mountain
  Field, Rachel  *The Calico Bush
  Allee, Marjorie Hill  Jane's Island
1933  Meigs, Cornelia  Swift Rivers
  Swift, Hildegarde Hoyt  *The Railroad to Freedom: A Story of the Civil War
1934  Singmaster, Elsie  Swords of Steel
  Schmidt, Sarah Lindsay  *New Land
1936  Brink, Carol Ryrie  *Caddie Woodlawn
  Strong, Phil  Honk the Moose
1937  Lenski, Lois  *Phoebe Fairchild, Her Book
  Bianco, Marjory  Winterbound
1938  Robinson, Mabel  *Bright Island
  Wilder, Laura Ingalls  *On the Banks of Plum Creek
1939  Enright, Elizabeth  *Thimble Summer
  Crawford, Phylis  "Hello the Boat!"
1940  Wilder, Laura Ingalls  *By the Shores of Silver Lake
  Meader, Stephen  Boy with a Pack

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Books</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Gates, Doris Wilder, Laura Ingalls</td>
<td>*Blue Willow The Long Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Edmonds, Walter D. Lenski, Lois Wilder, Laura Ingalls</td>
<td>*The Matchlock Gun N Indian Captive *Little Town on the Prairie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Estes, Eleanor</td>
<td>The Middle Moffat</td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Estes, Eleanor Wilder, Laura Ingalls Yates, Elizabeth</td>
<td>Rufus M *These Happy Golden Years *Mountain Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Lawson, Robert Daiglesh, Alice Estes, Eleanor</td>
<td>Kabbit Hill N The Silver Pencil The Hundred Dresses</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Lenski, Lois Henry, Marguerite</td>
<td>*Strawberry Girl N *Justin Morgan Had a Horse</td>
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<td>1947</td>
<td>Bailey, Carolyn Sherwin Barnes, Nancy Maxwell, William</td>
<td>Miss Hickory N *The Wonderful Year *Heavenly Tenants</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Henry, Marguerite</td>
<td>*Misty of Chincoteague</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Caudill, Rebecca Coblentz, Catherine Cate Havighurst, Waiter and Marian Montgomery, Rutherford</td>
<td>*Tree of Freedom The Blue Cat of Castle Town *Song of the Pines Kildee House</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Estes, Eleanor Sauer, Julia</td>
<td>Ginger Pye N Light of Tern Rock</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Krumgold, Joseph</td>
<td>*... And Now Miguel N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Daiglesh, Alice</td>
<td>The Courage of Sarah Noble</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>Lindquist, Jennie Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan</td>
<td>The Golden Name Day The Secret River</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Sorensen, Virginia Gibson, Fred</td>
<td>*Miracles on Maple Hill N Old Yeller</td>
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<td>1958</td>
<td>Keith, Harola Wright, Elizabeth Sandoz, Mari</td>
<td>*Rifles for Watie N Gone-Away Lake The Horsecatcher</td>
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<td>1959</td>
<td>Speare, Elizabeth Steele, William U.</td>
<td>The Witch of Blackbird Pond N The Perilous Road</td>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>Krumgold, Joseph George, Jean Craighead</td>
<td>Onion John N My Side of the Mountain</td>
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<td>1961</td>
<td>O'Dell, Scott Schaefer, Jack</td>
<td>Island of the Blue Dolphins N Old Ramon</td>
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<td>1964</td>
<td>Wier, Ester</td>
<td>*The Loner</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Hunt, Irene</td>
<td>*Across Five Aprils</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Hunt, Irene O'Dell, Scott</td>
<td>Up a Road Slowly N King's Fifth</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Konigsburg, E.L.</td>
<td>Jennifer, Hecate, William McKinley and Me, Elizabeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Armstrong, William</td>
<td>*Sounder N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Byars, Betsy O'Dell, Scott</td>
<td>Summer of the Swans N Sing Down the Moon</td>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>O'Brien, Robert Eckert, Allan W. Miles, Miska Snyder, Zilpha Keatley</td>
<td>*Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH N *Incident at Hawk's Hill *Annie and the Old One The Headless Cupid</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>George, Jean Craighead</td>
<td>Julie of the Wolves N</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Hamilton, Virginia Collier, James Lincoln and Christopher Greene, Bette</td>
<td>M.C. Higgins the Great N My Brother Sam is Dead *Philip Hall Likes Me I Reckon, Maybe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Taylor, Mildred Steig, William</td>
<td>*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry N Abel's Island</td>
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</table>
1978  Paterson, Katherine  Highwater, Jamake  Bridge to Terabithia  Anpao

1980  Bios, Joan  *A Gathering of Days

1981  Paterson, Katherine  Langton, Jane  L'Engle, Madeleine  Jacob Have I Loved  The Fledgling  A King of Endless Light
## APPENDIX D

**NOVELS WITH URBAN SETTINGS**

Newbery Medal winners have been designated by an N. Contemporary urban settings have been designated by an *.

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1922</td>
<td>Bowen, William</td>
<td>The Old Tobacco Shop</td>
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<td>1928</td>
<td>Snedeker, Caroline Dale</td>
<td>Downright Dencey</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>Meigs, Cornelia</td>
<td>Clearing Weather</td>
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<td>1931</td>
<td>Gray, Elizabeth Janet</td>
<td>Meggy MacIntosh: A Highland Girl in the Carolina Colony</td>
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<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Sawyer, Ruth</td>
<td>Roller Skates N</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Atwater, Richard and Florence</td>
<td>Mr. Popper's Penguins</td>
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<td>1944</td>
<td>Forbes, Esther</td>
<td>Johnny Tremain N</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Lawson, Robert</td>
<td>The Great Wheel</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Selden, George</td>
<td>*A Cricket in Times Square</td>
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<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Neville, Emily</td>
<td>*It's Like This, Cat N</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Stolz, Mary</td>
<td>*The Noonday Friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Weik, Mary Hays</td>
<td>*The Jazz Man</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Konigsburg, E.L. Snyder, Zilpha</td>
<td>*From the Mixed-Up Rites of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler N</td>
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<td>*The Egypt Game</td>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>Ish-Kisher, Sulamith</td>
<td>Our Eddie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Hamilton, Virginia</td>
<td>*The Planet of Junior Brown</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Cleary, Beverly</td>
<td><em>Ramona and her Father</em></td>
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<td>Raskin, Ellen</td>
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<td><em>The Great Gilly Hopkins</em></td>
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<td>1982</td>
<td>Cleary, Beverly</td>
<td><em>Ramona Quimby, Age 8</em></td>
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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