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The writings of Monica Hughes: Implications for the middle school

Fondse, Christtine Heather, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University, 1987

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THE WRITINGS OF MONICA HUGHES:
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

DISSERTATION

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

By
Christtine Heather Fondse, B.A., M.ED.

The Ohio State University
1987

Reading Committee:  Approved By:
Dr. Charlotte S. Huck       Charlotte S. Huck
Dr. Janet G. Hickman       Adviser
Dr. Frank J. Zidonis   College of Education
To those who have made a difference, this page is lovingly dedicated:

My mother, Mrs. Heather Fondse, who first awoke in me the desire to explore "the realms of gold", for her belief in me which has remained unshaken.

My brother Roy and Evelyn his wife for their encouragement and support.

Mrs. Clara Bessie Schiff and the memory of Miss Margaret Moore, two rare teachers who touched the future.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My work on this study could not have been accomplished without the guidance and support of my dissertation committee to whom I owe a debt of gratitude. To Dr. Charlotte Huck, whose belief in children's literature and its significant role in the lives of children has influenced me, goes my deepest appreciation. I particularly value the freedom she gave me to pursue my own connections. Thanks to Dr. Janet Hickman whose unfailing good humour and advice have sustained me. To Dr. Frank Zidonis go especial thanks for his insightful recognition that a dissertation was embedded in an independent study. Thanks to Elinor Chelsom, Dr. Betty Cleaver, the Staff of the Edgar Dale Media Center, and Dr. Raymond Muessig for their encouragement and support. Finally, grateful thanks to Mrs. Barbara Fincher, treasured friend and superb typist, who helped transform scribbled dreams into reality.
In Appreciation of Monica Hughes

These words seem singularly appropriate in their expression of the relationship between the author and her audience:

Dear reader, I shall begin and see what happens to arise between the two of us.
You who hold this book in your hand, I wonder
Do you open it with curiosity?
With greed and hunger because you feel emptied of all skill
As I sometimes do?
To jibe at other's ways of thought?
Or because you have been told you must,
Or only recommended just to try?
Is your interest in the book,
Or in the name upon the cover,
Or in those names you read within?
Because my words are lame
I ask of you that as you read
You will neither judge all nor believe all that you read of me,
But rather that you inquire, as a man going into a labyrinth,
Or toward death, or to a new place,
Or when returning to an old familiar one
(So that things may come to you as you read)
Or you stumble upon them almost by chance when turning round a corner.
I ask this because I would wish my mind and yours to meet here,
Not as opponents who might clash
or friends who greet each other's wisdom,
but rather as persons who eye one another from the place we fit;
and out of the eyeing,
we are surprised into new understanding.

Dorothy Heathcote
Of These Seeds Becoming: Drama in Education
VITA

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FIELDS OF STUDY

Children's Literature
Young Adult Literature
Language Arts
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Fiction Defined</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Growth and Development of a Genre</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's and Young Adult Science Fiction</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Author - Monica Hughes</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Author Studies in Children's Literature</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of the Study</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Study</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. BACKGROUND OF AUTHOR</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Reading Influences</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Becoming a Writer: Other Influences</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Patterns</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition of the Story</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Germ of Story</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Process of Meditation</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) The First Draft</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Revision</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequels</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### III. HISTORICAL AND REALISTIC FICTION WORKS

- **Historical Fiction** ........................................ 92
- **Realistic Fiction** ........................................ 110
- **Summary** ................................................. 129

### IV. SCIENCE FICTION TO 1982

- **Science Fiction** ........................................ 130
- **Summary** ................................................. 182

### V. SCIENCE FICTION SINCE 1982 AND HUGHES' SHORT STORIES

- **Science Fiction Novels Since 1982** ................ 185
- **Short Stories** ........................................... 200
- **New Directions** ......................................... 210
- **Summary** ................................................. 215

### VI. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM

- **A Developmental Portrait of the Middle School Child** ........................................ 219
- **The Child as Critic** ..................................... 226
- **The Educator's Role in Nurturing Discerning Readers in a "Response-Centered" Literature Environment** ........................................ 231
- **A Rationale for Including Hughes' Works in the Middle School Literature Programme** ........................................ 236
- **Suggestions for Extending Encounters with Hughes' Works** ................................. 242
  - a) **Reading Aloud** ...................................... 242
  - b) **Drama** ............................................... 243
  - c) **Writing** ............................................. 246
  - d) **Arts and Media** ................................... 249
  - e) **Other Activities** ................................... 251
- **Discussion as Exploration** .............................. 254
- **Summary** ................................................. 260
### VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- Conclusions: 271

### APPENDICES

- A. CHRONOLOGY: 278
- B. AWARDS: 282
- C. WEBBINGS OF CRISIS ON CONSHELF TEN AND THE KEEPER OF THE ISIS LIGHT: 284

### LIST OF REFERENCES: 324
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the last fifteen years, the number of books written in the science fiction genre has increased dramatically, especially since 1975. In the introduction to their bibliography on the modern period, DeBolt and Pfeiffer (1981) record the increase of science fiction titles:

The first 35 years of the modern period are represented by about 700 entries, or about 20 per year, while the period from 1975 to 1980 is represented by more than 200 entries, or about 40 per year. The commercial attraction of SF has increased radically. More writers are writing, and they are better than in the past (p. 125).

What has caused this accelerated interest in science fiction?

Perhaps the fact that the year 1984, made famous by George Orwell's book of the same title, had approached. Perhaps the threat of nuclear disaster caused not only by the remembrance of Nagasaki and Hiroshima but also by nuclear power stations of the magnitude of Three Mile Island, the Chernobyl disaster, hang like the sword of Damocles over our heads, thereby creating more concern for the future of civilization. The recent accomplishments in the science industries, including the field of computer technology with its increased accessibility for the general public as well as the success of the space shuttle programmes (the Challenger tragedy notwithstanding), has restimulated conjectures about the future of humanity.
in the far reaches of space. It may be that organizations like Scientology, Silva Mind Control, and Arica "are attempts to re-introduce the transcendent mystical experience into modern culture through science, not in spite of it, to transcend the circumscribed spiritual parameters of the scientific world view, not by denying it, but by appropriating at least the semblance of its methodology for transcendent ends" (Spinrad, 1982, p. 114).

Not only has research in psychological phenomena such as extrasensory perception increased speculation about the implications of such abilities. The growing realization that many of our most pressing problems such as over-population and pollution which look to science and technology for answers has also assisted in focusing attention on science fiction. Such thoughts can be found in the concept of building permanently inhabited, self-sustaining independent cities in space now being seriously discussed by both scientists and business leaders. Examination of the possibility of intrusion into the privacy of the mind is also an ideal metaphor for the invasions of privacy which threaten the individual in modern society. The most important aspect, however, of this increased attention to science fiction, is the improvement in the quality of the science fiction literature itself. For increasingly, science fiction writers are making concerted efforts to improve the quality of science fiction literature in line with "mainstream" works.
Science Fiction Defined

The term "science fiction" is firmly related to eras in which a widespread knowledge of science and its applications has a significant influence on the lives of ordinary human beings, and in which extrapolations regarding future scientific and social effects could be worked out with a measure of plausibility. Since science fiction written specifically for children is a relatively recent literary phenomenon, its growth is closely related to the development of such literature written for adults. For this reason, it is necessary to make a brief examination of adult science fiction.

From its beginnings science fiction has been linked with the fantastic, which may well be why no precise definition of this genre has been established. In his True History written at the beginning of the Christian era and first published in English in 1634 by Francis Hicks, the Syrian satirist, Lucian of Samosata, told of a boat load of adventurers snatched up into the heavens by a whirlwind and waterspouts which carry them to the moon where they become embroiled in a war between the King of the Moon and the King of the Sun over the colonization of Jupiter (Aldiss & Wingrove, 1986, pp. 68-69). As Aldiss and Wingrove (1986) maintain, Lucian was "not only the first writer of interplanetary fiction, but the first writer to describe prosthetic limbs and cyborgs" (p. 69) and the first to portray a "Dream Palace, which has made several appearances in the
fiction of our day" (p. 69). Bishop Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone* (1638), "the first English language voyage to the Moon" (Clareson, 1981, p. 3), recounts a lunar voyage where the hero ascended into the blue harnessed to a bird-drawn vehicle. Pulp science fiction of the 1930s and 1940s was still filled with such fantastical elements as half-naked blonde girls being attacked by giant lobsters, martians, and bug-eyed monsters. It may have been these elements which prompted Sam Moskowitz (1963) to define science fiction as a "branch of fantasy identifiable by the fact that it eases the 'willing suspension of disbelief' on the part of the readers by utilizing an atmosphere of scientific credibility for its imaginative speculations in physical science, space, time, social science and philosophy" (p. 11). For Aldiss and Wingrove (1986) "science fiction is the search for a definition of mankind and his status in the universe which will stand in our advanced but confused state of knowledge (science), and is characteristically cast in the Gothic or post-Gothic mode" (p. 25). Aldiss' shorter definition is "hubris clobbered by nemesis" (p. 26). Darko Suvin (1972) assumes a different stance. For him, science fiction is the "literature of cognitive estrangement" (p. 372). He further elaborates:

SF is ... a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical
environment.... /Science fiction/ demands from the author and reader, teacher and critic, not merely specialized, quantified positivistic knowledge (scientia) but a social imagination whose quality, whose wisdom (sapientia), testifies to the maturity of his critical and creative thought (pp. 375-381).

Others who have explored the realm of science fiction make varied distinctions. Greenlaw's (1970) definition is that "science fiction is the genre of literature that imaginatively depicts plausible events that are logical extrapolations of known fact and are descriptive of the social impacts of science and technology" (pp. 25-26). Ernes (1980) concurs with Greenlaw's definition, which he used as the basis of his dissertation study entitled "A Content Assessment of Science Fiction from 1947-1979 with Implications for the Elementary Social Studies Curriculum" (pp. 20-21). Nilsen and Donelson (1985) cite Robert A. Heinlein, one of the giants of science fiction writers who defined science fiction as speculative fiction in which the author takes as his first postulate the real world as we know it, including all established facts and natural laws. The result can be extremely fantastic in content, but it is not fantasy; it is legitimate - and often very tightly reasoned - speculation about the possibilities of the real world (p. 176).

Writers have sought to distinguish between science fiction and fantasy. Madeleine L'Engle (1982) has admitted that "the lines between science fiction, fantasy, myth, and fairy tale are very
fine, and children, unlike many adults, do not need to have their stories pigeonholed" (p. 104). Nevertheless, she does add that "science fiction usually takes a contemporary scientific idea and then extrapolates: 'Yes, but what if ...?'" (p. 104). Sylvia Engdahl (1973) maintains that "science fiction differs from fantasy not in subject matter but in aim, and its unique aim is to suggest real hypotheses about mankind's future or about the law of the universe" (p. 251). Huck, Hepler, and Hickman (1987) suggest that "fantasy (even 'science fantasy') presents a world that never was and never could be, while science fiction speculates on a world that, given what we now know of science, might just one day be possible" (p. 378). While there are critics who include science fiction as a branch of fantasy, Aldiss and Wingrove (1986) concede that "having fought the good fight to define SF, we have to admit defeat in distinguishing between SF and fantasy" (p. 27).

Science fiction "may be undefinable and imperceptible simply because its parameters vary with the circumstances of its application" (Egoff, 1981, p. 131). Afficionados today often prefer to use the abbreviation "SF," a term which can be taken to mean Science Fiction, Science Fantasy, Speculative Fiction, Space Fantasy, Schlock Fantasy, or even Scientific Fantabulation. Science fiction takes in from the strands of fantasy, historical fiction, realistic and social fiction, weaving them into a textured fabric of wholly new
design. Science fiction can be recognized "fairly easily, although it is rarely found in a pure isolated state. Just like oxygen" (Aldiss and Wingrove, 1986, p. 27).

The Growth and Development of a Genre

The improvement in the literature of science fiction can be understood only in the light of its history. The development of science fiction coincides with and reflects the history of technological development. As a genre, science fiction has not always been in vogue; indeed, for generations there were those, librarians and teachers among them, who summarily scorned such fiction, labelling it pulp literature and "trash" and banished it to a literary ghetto. In establishing antecedents for the genre some trace its roots in tales of ancient civilizations which focus on fantastic journeys and utopian societies. One such prototype of contemporary science fiction includes Plato's account of the fabulous Atlantis, the lost island. According to Ben Bova (1975), Cyrano de Bergerac in 1657 began the modern era of science fiction in his tales about travel to the heavenly bodies (p. 42). These voyages to the Sun and the Moon are described as "the jolliest of all lunar books" (Aldiss & Wingrove, 1986, p. 73). Aldiss and Wingrove (1986) mention that Voltaire in his Micromegas, written in 1750 brought to earth a gigantic visitor from Sirius and a slightly smaller native of Saturn (p. 85). Here can be seen the notion of the alien encounter
in an earlier century, for these beings had a hard time deciding whether there is intelligent life on earth. Clareson (1981) tells of a British cleric, Bishop John Wilkins, who published a book of seminal influence in 1638 titled *A Discourse Concerning a New World and Another Planet*, in which he voiced the opinion that one day man would learn to fly and that he would have a colony on the moon (p. 6). Certainly more fantastic than scientific, such tales are nevertheless the precursors of the genre.

The common thread running through utopian fiction, another literary form having its origins in earlier centuries, is the dissatisfaction with contemporary society. Such utopias permit us to see a perfect society made attainable, a purpose much like that of science fiction. Clareson (1981) refers to one of the most famous, Thomas More's *Utopia* of 1516, which "gave science fiction its first myth" (p. 10). The book argued for simple laws understandable to all and for common ownership of everything. Aldiss and Wingrove (1986) cite others in "the noble line of utopias - such as Johann Valentin Andrea's *Christianopolis* (1619), Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis* (1627), Tommaso Campanella's *Civitas Solis (The City of the Sun)* (1623)," and those of the nineteenth century like "Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872), W.H. Hudson's *A Crystal Age* (1887), and Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888)" which have
"Slid down like sinking liners into the cold depths of dystopianism" (p. 77).

Nearly all of literature dealt with fanciful and unrealistic romances until 1605, when Cervantes' *Don Quixote* satirized the popular form (Bova, 1975, p. 42). The satire remained popular, but realism gradually intruded, becoming so much more admired that the Victorians felt compelled to justify their works by comparison to reality. It is then, when science-based technology began to make its impact felt on common folk toward the beginning of the nineteenth century, that some of the basic themes of modern science fiction appeared. Mary Shelley, in 1818, dreamt of the artificial creation of life in *Frankenstein*, a book often credited as being the first true science fiction novel. In "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845), Edgar Allan Poe imaginatively described a dying man kept in a state of suspended animation until awakened by a mesmerist (Harrison, 1902, pp. 154-166). Shelley's work, with its combination of Gothic elements and science, exerted a profound influence on the genre (Ernes, 1980, p. 27). It was a remarkable success in book and theatrical form soon after its publication. Elements of the Gothic horror story as expressed by Poe also permeate science fiction writing today.

It was in the nineteenth century that two authors emerged, Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, who are credited with being the
founding fathers of science fiction (Gunn, 1975, p. 33). Verne, a writer of noted scientific romances, conjured machines which allowed his characters to indulge Man's search for individual freedom in a series of *Voyages extraordinaires*. His inventions influenced a later generation of science fiction hardware story writers with a penchant for gadgetry. Wells has been called "the Prospero of all the brave new worlds of the mind, and the Shakespeare of science fiction" (Aldiss & Wingrove, 1986, p. 133). He took the archetypal "little man" and propelled him into unfamiliar surroundings and unexpected events. His *The Time Machine* written in 1895 is still the "most powerfully evocative of all time-travel stories, an essentially pessimistic view of what might become of Man. It embodied completely the basic Wellsian message and technique - the sombre warning clothed in glittering words and delivered in breath-taking flights of imagination" (Ash, 1976, p. 204).

In Wells's works, which do not depict technology as a panacea for all earthly ills but rather contain a strong philosophical component which issue a warning to humanity about the future, lie the seeds of the dystopian novel. His themes like the mad scientist, time-travel, and alien invasion have become the mainstays of science fiction. His unique vision influenced other science fiction writers, especially the Czech philosopher Karel Capek, who introduced the world to the word "robot" in his play *R.U.R.* (1923), and
Yevgeny Zamyatin, both of whose works are philosophic in tone and are a grim commentary on human fallability. Said Clareson (1981) of Zamyatin's famous novel: "With We, utopia died" (p. 30).

Although Verne and Wells have become names linked with the genre, many other writers of the nineteenth century made contributions to the field. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, H. Rider Haggard, R.L. Stevenson, Dickens, and Rudyard Kipling are amongst those who contributed to the growing body of science fiction. These were authors of popular stories in which technological inventions or scientific discoveries were dominant features of the background and plot and which helped to establish this style of writing as a literary form.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, on the American side of the Atlantic and with the advent of rapid industrialization, readers sought stories which reflected technical marvels and the possibilities inherent in the new age, tales quick to read yet inexpensive to match their scant pocketbooks. And so was born the audience for magazines which were justifiably called "pulp"; not only were the paper and printing the cheapest available but the stories themselves, hastily-written, left much to be desired. These "penny dreadfuls" and "dime novels" filled the role in that era that television does today. These sensational tales of romance and adventure, of frightened lovelies menaced by giant squid in darkest Africa, remote regions of Asia, other planets, or
the Wild West, attracted a young, mostly male audience. As early as the late 1870s, the Frank Reade stories, "perhaps the most important SF in nineteenth-century America, began to appear" (Molson, 1981, p. 336). Inspired by the dime novels, these stories enthralled American youngsters. Luis Senarens, writing his first story while still in his teens, used the pseudonym "Noname" to chronicle the exploits of a boy genius who created many unusual inventions.

The pulps, many of which were poorly written adventure stories, could have been written for any genre, and it is unfortunate this reputation still clings to the science fiction writing of today. But the pulps also provided a vehicle for authors to gain fame and recognition. One such writer was Edgar Rice Burroughs, whose most famous hero, Tarzan "is the only one to attain mythic proportions, and become an integral part of twentieth-century popular culture" (Clareson, 1981, p. 39). His major writings sold as magazine serials, often well before book publication. The Martian stories featured John Carter, the first being A Princess of Mars in 1917. Burroughs's characters explored exotic locales, Mars, Venus, and the centre of the earth. His alien beings, such as the arachnid Kaldanes, the headless rykors, and the giant predatory banths, were fearsome monsters to be conquered by humans. Though his narrative powers were strong, Burroughs' tales were intellectually undemanding, action-packed
adventures with a hint of sexuality and violence. Nevertheless, his output was popular and sales remain undiminished today.

The development of modern science fiction began with one enterprising man, Hugo H. Gernsback, the "founding father" who "invented magazine science fiction" (Asimov, 1982, p. 106). Ash (1976) briefly traces Gernsback's accomplishments. He notes that Gernsback, an electrical engineer, in 1908 began publishing Modern Electrics, the first magazine devoted to radio. As page fillers in the publication, he ran occasional serializations of scientific romances, beginning in 1911 with his own Ralph 124 C41+: A Romance of the Year 2660, a utopian vision of the inventions and innovations of the future which contained some astonishingly accurate technical predictions (p. 104). The popularity of this type of material prompted him, in 1923, to devote a complete issue of his Science and Invention to what he called "scientifiction" stories (p. 104). Though there is some dispute as to whether he coined the term, he is generally credited with giving this literary form its name. In 1926 he launched Amazing Stories as a magazine exclusively devoted to science fiction (p. 104). Relying to some extent on reprints of Wells, Verne, and Poe, he also assembled a team of scientists gifted in the kind of technical extrapolations to which he was dedicated, but hardly noted for their literary ability. Nevertheless, fans enjoyed the tales and Gernsback
founded other science fiction magazines using his successful technique. His demands for sterile scientific accuracy in stories made his work formula-ridden and repetitive, but he did offer a market for a kind of science fiction. The Hugo Award, given at the World Science Fiction convention for excellence in science fiction writing, honours his name as the founding father of the genre.

Asimov (1982) has said that what prevented magazine science fiction from "sinking through the sub-basement and into moronic oblivion was the unremitting labour of one quixotic and idiosyncratic man," (p. 103), John W. Campbell, Jr., born in New Jersey in 1910. His prodigious influence was greatly felt when in 1937 he was appointed editor of Astounding Stories, a position he held until his death in 1971. Campbell introduced many new writers who quickly gained notable reputations, including Robert A. Heinlein, Lester del Rey, Theodore Sturgeon, and Asimov himself. As editor, Campbell demanded much, insisting on the elements of plausible science and good fiction in every story, thus improving the literary quality of the writing. Authors were now free to invent anything as long as the known laws of science were not violated.

In 1960 Campbell changed the name of Astounding to Analog to reflect the changes in the magazine's new image as a means of
revealing all the possibilities of the future. His growing pre-occupation with psi-powers and other paranormal factors distressed earlier enthusiasts but introduced a further array of new writers. In moving away from "the adolescently conceived superman, space opera, gadget-fascinated stories" (DeBolt & Pfeiffer, 1981, p. 129) to a more serious, questioning variety of science fiction, Campbell is credited with developing what is known as the Golden Age of science fiction. This period lasted from 1939 to 1950 (Antzcak, 1985, p. 21).

The 1950s witnessed the birth and development of such other new magazines as The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Galaxy Science Fiction, and anthologies of "best" stories, which made their first appearance at the end of the 1940s and which continue to be published today as an established part of the genre. One such anthologist today is Harlan Ellison, who has achieved acclaim for such mammoth compilations as Dangerous Visions (1983) and Again, Dangerous Visions (1983).

Meanwhile, society had come to terms with the power of modern technology, which has the potential to accomplish both good and evil. Recognizing that change is inevitable, people began speculating about these changes. The landing on the moon by Neil Armstrong in 1969 renewed interest in the future: not only regarding the ultimate achievement of the space programme, the progress
of humanity through technology, but also of the ultimate destiny of the human race.

Other subjects previously considered taboo to science fiction were now beginning to be explored in the genre: sex, radical politics, and religion. The threat of nuclear holocaust, the misuse of technology resulting in pollution, the burden of over-population, all helped create the emergence of an anti-science fiction, the dystopian novel. A less self-congratulatory tone regarding the marvels of science appeared. These new dimensions were evidenced in such works as Russell Hoban's (1982) *Riddley Walker*, where the savagery that follows the death of our world is brilliantly described; in del Rey's (1981) *The Eleventh Commandment*, which takes the biblical edict, be fruitful and multiply, to its logical and horrifying conclusion; and in Kate Wilhelm's (1976) *Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang*, which describes the effects of pollution and cloning.

The 1960s saw the continuation and development of these trends. Writers of the calibre of Kurt Vonnegut, Philip K. Dick, and Ursula LeGuin generated a new vitality, for their richly imagined universes moved science fiction from the literary ghetto into the mainstream of literature. It was this era, too, which witnessed the birth of the "New Wave" school of science fiction writers genuinely concerned with both literary style and political awareness, experimenting with a variety
of techniques reminiscent of James Joyce and others. Michael Moorcock, a British writer and editor was a seminal influence on this particular school, for he encouraged experimental styles and approaches, cultivating writers who would distinguish themselves like Harlan Ellison, Thomas M. Disch, Roger Zelazny, J.G. Ballard, and John Sladek, among others.

Another influence on science fiction in the 1960s was the revival of interest in fantasy literature after Tolkien's (1965) *Lord of the Rings* trilogy was published in paperback form. The influence of fantasy on science fiction was to be seen in Anne McCaffrey's novels. Winner of the 1968 Hugo Award, she was also honoured with the Nebula Award the same year for *Dragonrider*. *The Dragonriders of Pern* (1979) takes place in the world of Pern and explores the empathy existing between men and flying dragons in this mythical land. Although a rational explanation accounts for this phenomenon, the book is certainly more closely related to fantasy than science fiction.

The increasing similarity between fantasy and science fiction is accompanied by an increasing tendency to rely upon the social sciences rather than on extrapolations from the natural sciences. LeGuin's (1969) novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*, for example, portrays a world and its inhabitants in sociological, philosophical, and psychological perspectives. LeGuin's (1974) *The Dispossessed*
attacks the conventional traditional view of women, and Johanna Russ (1970) *And Chaos Died* and *The Female Man* (1975) deal with the theme of sex and sexism. This greater versatility saw the emergence of more women writers in the field, including Lessing, McIntyre, Sargent, Vinge, and Yarbro.

By the 1970s then, science fiction had become a much more versatile and flexible literature than previously. The level of writing was of a higher standard than ever before, and the distinctions between science fiction and mainstream literature had blurred considerably. In fact, Nilsen and Donelson (1985) quote Ray Bradbury's assertion that science fiction is not "part of the Main Stream. It is the Main Stream" (p. 174). Writers of the stature of Thomas Pynchon, Doris Lessing, and Margaret Atwood (1986) whose recent success, *The Handmaid's Tale*, is a chilling portrait of the America of the future, publish works that are science fiction, thereby attesting to the attraction of this genre for those whose literary output merit serious attention.

Science fiction's popularity has increased, too, due to films. As DeBolt and Pfeiffer (1981) elaborate:

> The SF film and SF literature have become inextricably connected, especially in the broadly popular perception of science fiction. Many fine SF works become successful films (dates refer to the film): D.F. Jones' *Colossus: The Forbin Project* (1970),
Crichton's *The Andromeda Strain* (1971), Christopher's *No Blade of Grass* (1970), Burgess' *Clockwork Orange* (1971), Ellison's *A Boy and His Dog* (1975), Finney's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1980), and King's *Carrie* (1978) represent this trend. No less interesting are the SF works that have become popular because of the great success of the films from which they were adapted (dates refer to the film): Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), Blish's *Star Trek* books, Lucas' *Star Wars* (1977), Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977, 1980), and A.D. Foster's *Alien* (1979) are extraordinary examples. One way or another, the success of the SF film has radically altered the popular reception of SF as literature (pp. 128-129).

From the strange and wondrous prototypes of earlier centuries, through the banal, trite pulp magazines, to serious literary speculation about technology and society, science fiction for adults has become intellectually and aesthetically more satisfying. The level of writing is now of a higher standard than ever before. Characters are unique and complex, sometimes with ambiguous, even questionable morals. Narratives are more intricate, and may alternate among several first person narrators or use stream of consciousness techniques, word play, and prose/poetry counterpoint.

**Children's and Young Adult Science Fiction**

Just as children appropriated books originally intended for adults, such as *Gulliver's Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe*, so too have
they sought joy and delight in the classics of Verne and Wells written with an adult audience in mind. However, there now does exist a body of such literature for the young whose history and ideas in many ways reflect those written for adults.

Science fiction for children has a relatively short history. Its late appearance was signalled when Edward Stratmeyer's Literary Syndicate produced the Tom Swift series, whose forerunner was Roy Rockwood's The Great Marvel books. The Tom Swift series, which began to appear in 1910, can barely be considered science fiction. According to Molson (1985) these early Tom Swift books were, at best, really only stories of inventions in tune with the prevailing American penchant for gadgetry, but which had not the seriousness nor soundly based scientific background (pp. 60-61).

Marilyn Jean Greenlaw (1970) cites Alexei Panshin, who believes that the English writer John Keir Cross' The Angry Planet (1946) was the first children's science fiction novel (p. 35). However, others consider American Robert A. Heinlein's (1947) Rocket Ship Galileo as the first children's science fiction which merited serious critical attention (Egoff, 1981, p. 134; Ernes, 1980, p. 56; Esmonde, 1981, p. 3; Molson, 1981, p. 335; Svilpis, 1983, p. 22). Three high school boys and one atomic scientist uncle are launched onto the moon in a rocket ship constructed in the backyard only to discover they are not the first arrivals. Powerful Nazis have
already established a base of operations and are preparing for world conquest. It is hardly surprising they are the foe to be effectively vanquished, considering the publication date. The story, combining adventure and mystery with the science of rocketry and the presence of the Nazis, gives the novel its suspense. Egoff (1981) seems to dismiss Heinlein's book as "an example of the transposed plot; put 'cloak and dagger' on the moon and it becomes science fiction" (p. 134).

Although the scientific and technological advances occasioned by World War II had a profound and explosive effect upon science fiction for adults, strangely enough those for children remained almost untouched. These books, in the main, were light hearted and whimsical where science was given a less than starring role. There were the popular Mushroom Planet series by Eleanor Cameron, where pseudoscience comes to the fore as in The Wonderful Flight to the Mushroom Planet (1954) in which the rocketship is powered by the steam of a coffee urn. Cameron (1981), in her essay "Fantasy, SF and the Mushroom Planet Books" admits that except for Time and Mr. Bass, the others in the series had been written "with a twinkle of the eye in the tone" (p. 7). Heinlein's relatively unsophisticated thrillers for young readers from the 1940s to the 1960s like Space Cadet, Red Planet, Starman Jones, Farmer in the Sky, Have Space
Suit - Will Travel and Podkayne of Mars, owe their success to zestful, adventurous protagonists as well as their depiction of far-flung solar systems (Sullivan, 1985, pp. 64-66).

Many of the novels did not really attempt to deal with genuine scientific extrapolations, with the notable exception of Arthur C. Clarke's (1952) novel Islands in the Sky, which predicted Skylab but made no political statements. Generally, such tales as Louis Slobodkin's (1952) little green boy from the planet Martinea in The Space Ship Under the Apple Tree, one of those early the-aliens-are-here-stories, were aimed at a younger audience. Almost marooned on Earth when he loses the power source for his spacecraft, Marty, unlike the latter day E.T., causes no panic; people do not fuss over his unusual appearance, an aspect which appears to mirror the naive innocence of a more tranquil age. Ruthven Todd's (1952) Space Cat, another lighthearted story, now an endearing period piece since the landing on the moon by the astronauts, still retains a charm in its description of the antics of Flyball, a lovable, mischievous bundle of fur.

A few books did not present an entirely optimistic outlook. Lester del Rey's 1954 selection Step to the Stars reflects the Cold War fear of Communism demonstrated by the paranoid era of McCarthy, for the story not only pits the U.S. against the "Combine" of eastern Europe and northern Asia, but deals with the tensions of
the space race. Admittedly, Jim Hanley, rugged individualist, in his untiring efforts to get the U.S. and "Combine" scientists to work together to explore space provides a singular hope, as relevant today as it was then, but there is an uneasy tension that runs through the book.

It is not to say that all science fiction written for children was gloomy, or indeed, fearful of the Cold War. Many young readers entered the portals of this genre through the several humorous series whose characters, like Danny Dunn and Miss Pickerell, have adapted to a changing world. Ellen MacGregor's (1951) *Miss Pickerell Goes to Mars* introduces an intrepid, elderly spinster whose idyllic country existence is shattered because of the unwarranted intrusions of modern science; a space ship is parked in her pasture. In endeavouring to remove the trespassers she is thrust into an adventure where she becomes a reluctant heroine despite her lack of knowledge about space. But by the 1960s, when Dora Pantell contributes to the old lady's exploits, Miss Pickerell is more open to technology and in *Miss Pickerell and the Lost World* (1986) is not averse to confrontation nor political intrusions as in *Miss Pickerell Takes the Bull by the Horns* (1976).

Like Miss Pickerell, the Danny Dunn series, created by Jay Williams and Raymond Abraskin, has matured; but there is nevertheless a buoyant tone, for this enterprising young boy detective mixes
humour and scientific fact in his exploits. Other humorous books of recent years include Christine Nostlinger's (1983) Konrad, a refreshing spoof on technology gone awry. Mrs. Bartolotti receives a package mistakenly sent to her containing a factory created son, Konrad, perfect in every way. They develop a bond of affection for each other and prevent the factory investigators from discovering their error. But such fun-filled tales are rare in the science fiction of today.

Children's literature of the 1940s and, in particular the 1950s, portrayed a gentle, serene universe. Such a feeling of well-being permeated society in general. Science fiction was no exception. As Molson (1981) makes clear, publishers contributed to the development of intellectually undemanding fare, accepting any manuscripts dealing with first trips to and from planets and little else (p. 338). But the seemingly halcyon fifties gave way to the tumultuous social convulsions of the sixties, where students experimented with drugs and sex, were enraptured by songs of the Beatles, Joan Baez, and Bob Dylan, chanted to the rhythms of poets like Ginsberg, protested the Vietnam war, and generally decried society's hypocrisy. With the advent of this decade, science as an all-powerful tool of progress began to diminish, to be replaced by a burgeoning interest in sociological, psychological, and philosophical considerations.
Janice Antzack (1985) marks Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* as "a watershed novel" (p. 27) in children's science fiction of the 1960s. This riveting tale concerns Meg, her precocious five-year-old brother Charles Wallace Murray, and their friend fourteen-year-old Calvin O'Keefe, who must confront the insidious evil "IT" which threatens the very life of Mr. Murray and the survival of civilization itself. And science alone cannot do battle to avert this pressing corruption; only in tandem with the awesome power of love that Meg possesses can the enemy be vanquished and Mr. Murray be rightfully restored to his family. In a complex blend of science, philosophy, religious and metaphysical considerations, satire and allegory, L'Engle's innovative work opened the door for more female protagonists, and, as Antzack rightly asserts, was a creation "whose time had come" (p. 27).

While major writers for adults had adhered to science fiction warnings about the future based on present realities, the sociological aspect had been less noticeable in books written for children. But following in L'Engle's footsteps, writers became more adventuresome, experimenting with philosophical modes, and, like their adult counterparts in science fiction, became more chilling in their tales. There was a loss of innocence about technological wizardry and naive, idealistic views of the future.
John Christopher's books are a case in point, presenting a gloomy view of the future though each has a hero who valiantly strives to change the world around him. *The White Mountains* (1967b) and its sequels, *The City of Gold and Lead* (1967a) and *The Pool of Fire* (1968), describe a future world which has been reduced to a subservient society, controlled by machine creatures called Tripods, who perpetuate their mastery over humans by inserting steel caps in the skulls of all children when they reach the age of fourteen. Finally, the Tripods are defeated, and remnants of various Earth governments meet to discuss world unity, only to be reduced to petty squabbling and dissent. Reverting to insular confines, the grand design collapses, and the ending, sober and realistic, becomes a reminder that vigilance against tyranny must be a constant, united effort despite the blindness of some. But are humans willing to learn?

An even greater disillusionment is demonstrated in Christopher's books of the 1970s, for they are more typical of the cynicism and civil anarchy which pervaded this decade, generated by an awareness of food and energy crises. The absence of scientific progress becomes apparent in Christopher's second science fiction trilogy, *The Prince in Waiting* (1970), *Beyond the Burning Lands* (1971), and *The Sword of the Spirits* (1972). England
in the twenty-first century reverts to a feudal society, a result of volcanic activity which has destroyed all of man's technical accomplishments. Humanity's climb back is arduous, and though the ending appears as if civilization is once more on the rise, it is without direction, and the message of decline is repeated. A similar view where the pursuit of science is strictly forbidden occurs in Peter Dickinson's trilogy The Weathermonger (1968), Heartsease (1969), and The Devil's Children (1970), in which a weather change in England causes mankind to fear and dread machines. In revolting against them and technology the people revert to a closed, suspicious agricultural society. Both books reflect prevalent pessimistic theories of social collapse - a new Dark Age.

Stories of post-catastrophic survival now surface as in the Robinson Crusoe-like Z for Zachariah (1975) by Robert O'Brien, in which nuclear doomsday has arrived. Fifteen-year-old Ann Burden, seemingly the only survivor, lives alone in an Eden-like valley. The appearance of a mysterious scientist, John R. Loomis, wearing a radiation proof suit, brings conflict and strife to this sanctuary. Written in journal format, the forbidding yet realistic tale of survival is relevant to contemporary concerns regarding the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the arms race. The clash between humanistic and scientific views, trust and betrayal, man versus
woman, the very nature of survival itself are explored. Ann's last encounter with Loomis leaves him in the valley while she heads toward the west and a new beginning.

While such survival stories show some optimism regarding the strength of the human spirit to triumph over adversity, others deal with future technological societies crushing individual freedom. Technology equated with authoritarianism is seen in Christopher's (1970a) The Guardians, an Orwellian tale set in an England of the future where society, divided into two distinct groups, is contrasted. The megalopolis, huge, sprawling, and dirty, is sharply divided from the world of the landed gentry where the Guardians, members of the elite, rule, and where creative, independent thought is lobotomized. Rob, previously from the megalopolis, now living in the County, discovers no one wishes to change the status quo, so he escapes to join a band of revolutionaries. Though the impression is that the human spirit will prevail, the underlying premise is that it can only be done so through force, a sobering thought that raises ethical questions.

None of these societies of the near future is portrayed as safe havens to inhabit. Society itself rarely changes, and when it does, the process is painful; authority figures are blinded to flaws in the system. William Sleator's (1974) House of Stairs is
Kafkaesque in intent, a tightly written, bleak tale, of a totalitarian world where human dignity and values have no place. Five teenagers subjected to a mind control experiment struggle to retain decency and self respect. Here, as in other books, victory is attained at tremendous cost, with virtually no personal recompense.

This pessimistic view of the future can be attributed to the decline of faith in science, and a parallel feeling that we are victims of a technology run rampant. The glowing, romantic view of the nineteenth century that knowledge could be pursued for its own sake, that science was to be the saviour of mankind, has been replaced by a growing distrust of its utilitarian powers, and therefore is suspect in its motives and goals.

But it is in the 1970s, too, that writers for children also began to go beyond the realm of hard science to introduce to the genre aspects of the social sciences such as anthropology and sociology as fields for extrapolation. Sylvia Louise Engdahl's (1970) _Enchantress from the Stars_ has Elana, the young heroine, belonging to an anthropological team from a most advanced super-race trying to save the Andrecians, in a feudal stage of development, from the imperialists, aliens of a more developed culture. Both Engdahl and Ben Bova are among the best known of the late
1960s and early 1970s who pioneered various themes and styles which have become hallmarks of the genre.

Recent science fiction has taken on a more speculative slant, exploring the inner landscape of mind. Extrasensory perception or mental telepathy, the meshing of the intangible with the tangible, is discernible among writers such as K.M. Peyton's (1972) *A Pattern of Roses*, Peter Dickinson's (1973) *The Gift*, and John Rowe Townsend's (1977) *The Xanadu Manuscript*, but most especially in the trilogy by Virginia Hamilton (1978) beginning with *Justice and Her Brothers*, where humanity, mystical, even transcendent, stands at the threshold of an evolutionary new universe. Unique characters are created in Thomas and Leir, the "mirror twins", and their younger sister Justice, but it is exploration of their powerful psychic capabilities which proves surprisingly innovative in children's science fiction, more so because Hamilton has created a contemporary family, believable in their interactions with each other. Her compelling portrayal of the effects of psychic discoveries, that perhaps such people may be the forerunners of a future race of humans, generates much thought. Like the children of Arthur C. Clarke's (1953) *Childhood's End*, Justice and her brothers symbolize a transformation in the human race, not unlike other adult writers such as John Wyndham and Lessing. However, for
the first time in children's fiction this manifestation of the continuing evolution of humanity is deemed a "mystical necessity" (Egoff, 1981, p. 151), a feeling conveyed with immediacy in the hands of a skilled writer.

Hamilton has enriched science fiction through her emphasis on character development, as have Yep in *Sweetwater* (1973) and Dickinson in *The Changes* trilogy. Characters are far less wooden than in previous eras, conversing with each other rather than simply being vehicles for social messages, and generally advance the plot. They are certainly more attractively presented than is society, which is revealed in all its ugliness. As anti-hero, society becomes a symbol of modern dystopia, an ulcerating sore.

But, if Hamilton's work suggests anything, the trend may be toward a shift from writing of survival "out there" in the real world, to that of inner survival. Like the "New Wave" writers in adult science fiction exemplified by J.G. Ballard and Thomas Disch, man's wondrous inner landscape appears to be the next stage of exploration. And so, adventure joins philosophy, ecology, and other humanistic and scientific concerns in recent science fiction for children. Little green men from Mars have given way to a consideration of not only the effects of genetic research, pollution, and nuclear energy, but the continuing evolution of a species - man.
It can be seen, then, that the history and development of science fiction written for children parallels that of the adult market. No longer is the genre the province of the pulp magazine with its meagre content; instead there has been a transformation effected, a more questing, serious brand of speculative fiction. It has moved from the glorification of the incredible possibilities of science to a questioning of its powers. In doing so, new creative voices are being heard, reflecting the concerns of our age in innovative ways. It is in such a climate that the writings of Monica Hughes begins to burgeon.

One Author - Monica Hughes

What if your home on Moon and the fate of Moon's natural resources were being threatened by a huge mining consortium from Earth? What if a sophisticated computer was slowly taking control of your city and only you realized it, but no one would listen to you? What if an object sacred to you and your people was on a display in a museum and you had to get it back? What if ...? This is a question Monica Hughes enjoys posing and answering in her science fiction and adventure novels. As she comments in Twentieth Century Children's Writers:

I write primarily science fiction because I find the world of "what if" the most exciting and challenging place to be in and to write about. It is also a very flexible medium
through which to approach and, hopefully to deal with the problems that young people are facing in today's society. I feel very strongly about the world, its ecological balance, and the even graver dangers that face us today, and these feelings are sometimes reflected in my work, as are my attitudes towards the aboriginal peoples — especially of the new world — whose culture and skills were so long despised by the European settlers and missionaries: only now are we becoming aware of the depth and complexity of their knowledge.

My plots derive from everyday life, from asking "What if?" and "What would happen then?", and from taking simple themes and working them out through the lives of my characters, whether in today's world or in some future place and time (Rubio, 1983, p. 391).

Monica Hughes, with nineteen published novels and eight short fiction selections to her credit, is an intelligent, informed writer who has written a substantial body of literature for children and young adults. She is the winner of the Beaver Award given in 1980 by the Hudson's Bay Company of Edmonton, Alberta, for the unpublished manuscript of her novel Hunter in the Dark. The manuscript, still unpublished, also won that same year the Writing-for-Youth Competition sponsored by Alberta Culture and Irwin Publishing, then known as Clarke Irwin. Other awards in recognition of this book, which was first published in 1982, are the Canada Council Prize for Children's Literature, the Saskatchewan Library Association Young Adult Novel Award, the Writers' Guild of Alberta R. Ross Annett
Award, the Silver Feather Federal Association of Women Doctors of Germany Award. It was included on the honour list of "Deutscher Jugendbuch pries" as well as the American Library Association Best Books for Young Adults list. Hughes is the recipient of the Canada Council Prize for Children's Literature for The Guardian of Isis, and the IBBY Certificate of Honour for its sequel, The Keeper of the Isis Light. She was honoured with the Vicky Metcalf Award in 1981 for a body of fiction inspirational to children. Hughes has also received the Vicky Metcalf Short Story Award in 1983 for "The Iron-Barred Door", a fine science fiction tale of action versus inaction. Ring-Rise Ring-Set, set in the Canadian Arctic regions in the near future, was a justifiable runner-up for the Guardian Award. The story of Liza Monroe and her experiences with the migratory Ekoes, who inhabit a cold, inhospitable landscape, is more than a simple tale of survival. It is a stimulant for thought about many issues - the harmonious balance between science and nature, the clash of cultures and their impact, journey into selfhood, altruism, and the development of wisdom. As Gerald Rubio (1980) so aptly states:

Professionals - librarians, teachers, book-sellers - familiar with even a few of Monica Hughes' ... published works recognize her as one of the best Canadian - and perhaps world - authors of juvenile fiction at work today. However... she has yet to attract the
critical recognition and wide Canadian readership her work merits (p. 20).

In examining Hughes' works, it is this writer's premise that children and young adult literature is rooted in the realm of all literature and that the same standards for literary criticism should apply. John Rowe Townsend (1971) maintains: "It has always seemed clear to me that a good book for children must be a good book in its own right" (p. 15), a view reiterated by Mollie Hunter (1976), a gifted, insightful writer for children (p. 2). Egoff, Stubbs, and Ashley (1980) reiterate Townsend's stance. They subscribe to the view that children's literature is "an essential part of the whole realm of literary activity, to be discussed in the same terms and judged by the same standards that would apply to any other branch of writing," thereby believing that the criticism of children's books does not "[call] for the adoption of a special scale of values" (p. xvii). This being the case, Hughes' work, evaluated by uniform criteria, would serve to illustrate the versatility of her art.

But though adult and children's books belong to one universal body of literature generated from universal patterns and archetypes, as Canadian scholar and critic Northrop Frye (1963) suggests, there are certain characteristics which make for a demarcation between these two strands of literature. As McDowell (1976) says,
"children's books are generally shorter; they tend to favour an active rather than a passive treatment, with dialogue and incident rather than description and introspection; child protagonists are the rule; ...; plots are of a distinctive order" (pp. 141-142). It is not to suggest that the writer for children is contemptuous of his youthful audience and their ability to appreciate fine writing, for as C.S. Lewis (1982) asserts, "the child as reader is neither to be patronized nor idolized: we talk to him as man to man"; rather that, as adults we "differ from our child readers ... by the fact that we have other interests which children would not share with us" (pp. 69-70). As Huck, Hepler, and Hickman (1987) maintain:

... the content of children's literature is limited by the experience and understanding of children. Certain emotional and psychological responses may seem outside the realm of childhood. For example, the feeling of nostalgia is an adult emotion that is foreign to most boys and girls.

Cynicism and despair are not childlike emotions. Today's children have a kind of surface cynicism about authority, politics, and the nuclear bomb. But despite their apparent sophistication, they still expect good things to happen in life.... Children see beauty where there is ugliness, they are hopeful when adults have given up. This is not to suggest that all stories for children must have happy endings; many today do not. It is only to say that when you close the door on hope, you have left the realm of childhood (pp. 5-6).
Monica Hughes expresses this hope and celebration of life in her books for children and young adults. And so, despite the apparent bleakness of the post-Armageddon survival story *Beyond the Dark River*, one discovers an optimistic note in the words spoken to Benjamin, a member of a restrictive Hutterite Bruderhof, by the fourteen-year-old Daughter-of-She-Who-Came-After, an Indian girl and tribal healer. The lines are almost like a beneficent prayer:

> Whatever happens our future will work out properly, if we leave ourselves open to the working. The tree falls, but the forest goes on. And out of the decayed trees, new things grow. We have made such changes, you and I, Benjamin, in one small way. Who knows what will come of it? (Hughes, 1979, p. 152)

She employs the same techniques as those of adult literature, but in such a skillful manner as to make them accessible to the young. For instance, in *Hunter in the Dark*, the author reveals the protagonist's inner anguish through the use of metaphor. As reader, one experiences compassion and a depth of understanding for the character Mike Rankin in his relentless battle with a terminal illness. So too, does she utilize other literary allusions. For example, she describes in *Crisis on Conshelf Ten* that just as Icarus dared to reach out to touch the stars, we must also dare to explore the oceans as possible areas in which to live, as an alternative to an
overcrowded world. We learn of Kepler's frustrations in this same book through his first person narration, as we do of Blaine's odyssey into manhood in *Blaine's Way*.

In her essay "Science Fiction and Mrs. Brown," LeGuin (1982) describes the characterization she feels is essential to literature, and which is sometimes found in science fiction. She uses the characterization of Nobuske Tagomi in Philip K. Dick's *Man in the High Castle*, and Thea Cadence, the protagonist of D.G. Compton's *Synthajoy*. These characters are as well developed as the Mrs. Brown which Virginia Woolf believed was the subject matter of the novel. LeGuin expresses that Thea and Mr. Tayomi:

... are people. Characters. Round, solid, knobby. Human beings, with angles and protruberances to them, hard parts and soft parts, depth and heights.

They also stand for a great deal, ... they express something the authors wanted urgently to say as clearly as possible. Something about human beings under stress, under peculiarly modern forms of moral pressure.

If the authors wanted to speak clearly why didn't they write an essay, a documentary, a philosophical or sociological or psychological study?

Because they are both novelists. Real novelists. They write science fiction, ..., because what they have to say is best said using the tools of science fiction, and the craftsman knows his tools. And still, they
are novelists, because while using the great range of imagery available to science fiction, they say what it is they have to say through a character - not a mouthpiece, but a fully realized secondary creation. The character is primary. And what used to be the entire object of science fiction - the invention of miraculous gadgets, the relation of alternate histories, and so on - is now used subjectively as a metaphor, as a means for exploring and explaining what goes on inside. Mrs. Brown, or Thea, or Tagomi. The writers' interest is no longer really in the gadget, or the size of the universe, or the laws of robotics, or the destiny of social classes, or anything described in quantitative, or mechanical, or objective terms. They are not interested in what things do, but in how things are. Their subject is the subject, that which cannot be other than subject: ourselves. Human beings (pp. 108-109).

While LeGuin recognizes that the capacity for such literary achievement exists, she also realizes that science fiction often fails to reach this level. As she maintains:

Science fiction has mostly settled for a pseudo-objective listing of marvels and wonders and horrors which illuminate nothing beyond themselves and are without real moral resonance: daydreams, wishful thinking, and nightmares.... And the more eccentric and childish side of science fiction, ..., both feed upon and nourish this kind of triviality, ..., which degrades taste.... It's a pity that this trivial image is perpetuated, when the work of people from Zamyatin to Lem has shown that when science fiction uses its limitless range of symbol and metaphor novelistically, with the subject at the center, it can show us who we are, and where we are, and what choices face us, with unsurpassed clarity, and with a great and troubling beauty (p. 118).
These two quotations illustrate LeGuin's concern is primarily with the characters as they discover meaning through their surroundings, as do the characters in Hughes' books. Her people are never depicted as glorified "rugged individuals" who never hesitate nor examine the implications of their actions because they are, of course, never wrong; Hughes represents the individual as a realistic human being, sometimes vulnerable, sometimes railing at the narrow confines which constrict, at other times weak, but also capable of great personal sacrifice.

Hughes' characters undergo a process of development in order to mature. The individual must learn about his surroundings and himself. He comes to understand himself and recognizes aspects of himself of which he was previously unaware through communication and companionship with other members of society. He must learn to accept responsibility for the consequences of his actions. Gadgetry and gimmicks are not Hughes' stock-in-trade; rather, humanity with its flaws intrigue this author.

A Statement of the Problem

In an overview of her work, this reader has discovered in Monica Hughes a writer not simply of science fiction, but one in whom "the imagination is not a self-indulgent, ornamental, or escapist faculty: it is the constructive power of the mind" (Sloan, 1984, p. ix) at work. And yet, she has not attracted the
large readership and critical attention that Gerald Rubio so rightfully asserts her work deserves. One could speculate on the reasons for the neglect of her work, but that is not at issue here. What one should address is simply: Is Hughes worth reading? The answer is resoundingly positive.

One evaluates her works and finds them not wanting. Her heroes and heroines are compelling, realistic figures, risking their lives for the common good, as Caro in The Tomorrow City, Ruth in The Dream Catcher, Kepler in Crisis on Conshelf Ten, or Benjamin and the Indian tribal healer in Beyond the Dark River. Marcia Brown (1986) says:

Youth sometimes fears commitments, gifts of the self, which if betrayed, damage whole areas of the psyche. And yet something tells them and us that what was feared, that final gift of one's spirit, the total risk of oneself, is a gift that will unlock life to them, will reveal the hero within (p. 57).

Hughes' youths are heroic but they are never superhuman. They share the same tribulations of contemporary teenagers, from the first stirrings of adolescent sexuality, to their search for self, to contending with mundane household chores like babysitting a younger sibling when they feel they ought to be participating in exciting adventures instead.

Though Hughes writes in various genres, science fiction seems to be her strength. As Rubio (1983) correctly determines, her works
could be read simply as rollicking, adventure yarns set in societies of the near or distant future, but, like More's Utopia, the settings are simply a means to an end, for we are all provided with insights into contemporary society while avoiding didactic overtones (p. 391). He further elaborates:

Depth of characterization, rare in science fiction, is Hughes' central concern: she argues that truth of character is the essence of all good fiction, and her novels present a gallery of credible, contemporary adolescents struggling to transform themselves into responsible young adults. They achieve maturity through adventures centering on the key social, economic, and moral dilemmas vexing the thoughtful of today: ecological havoc resulting from necessarily expanding technologies; diminishing food and energy sources from an exploding world population; exploitation of dependent cultures by the advanced; increasing over-reliance on computerization. Characters and problems are very contemporary and very real; Hughes places both in an extrapolated near future because only there could solutions be found (p. 391).

**Purpose of the Study**

To date, no critical study has been made of Monica Hughes and her works, nor of their implication for the middle school. As teacher-librarian in the Saskatoon Public School System in Saskatchewan, Canada, it has been this writer's experience to discover that students greatly appreciated Hughes' publications. Eager receptions accorded her works have also been noted by Rubio
(1980). He relates that "teenagers - including those who normally have no interest whatsoever in science fiction - respond ... favorably, if with less comprehension of the reason: they anticipate each new title with the enthusiasm of Star Wars fans about to see The Empire Strikes Back" (p. 20). It is the purpose of this study, therefore, to make an in-depth examination of the writings of Monica Hughes, to demonstrate that though she is essentially a fine writer of science fiction one must not overlook the full variety of the literary experience she offers. While Maduke (1981) believes that the essence of Hughes' work is Canadian in setting, subject, or theme, whether it be "survival in a hostile environment; coming to terms with mixed races and cultures; or the soul destroying effects of ethnocentrism and prejudice" (p. 6), it should be noted that Hughes reaches beyond narrow confines to examine ideas of universal concern.

In exploring Hughes' works, a literary framework applied to the books aids in identifying and appreciating patterns, providing a springboard for discussion. Rebecca Lukens (1982) examines the elements common to all imaginative literature - character, plot, setting, point of view, tone, theme - which authors of texts on children's and young adult literature like Nilsen and Donelson (1985), Huck, Hepler and Hickman (1987), and Norton (1983) suggest
are worthwhile applying to such literature in exploring the connection of these literary elements to the works. These critical tools will be used in evaluating and discussing Hughes' works, taking into consideration that writing for children presents special concerns and problems.

Children and young adults as readers require the guidance of a receptive adult to help them comprehend, contemplate, and discover literary connections about the materials under scrutiny. Since the adult is likely to be the middle or junior high school teacher, this teacher must know about children and literature. Says Vandergrift (1980): "Those who work with children and adults straddle two worlds. It is a mistake to think that one can work successfully with children's literature without keeping abreast of developments in adult literary criticism" (p. 273). It is this writer's contention that the teacher plays a vital role in nurturing the aesthetic reader of whom Rosenblatt (1938/1983, 1978, 1985) and Applebee (1978) speak, and it is this aspect which can only be developed if the teacher responds to and evaluates the literature knowledgeably. Then only can the understanding of students be developed and the interactive response to books from the "community of readers" that Hickman and Hepler (1982) have noted, be facilitated (p. 282). As such, the writer will focus on suggestions for
classroom implications of the novels, demonstrating ways in which teachers may help students to make literary connections, develop literary perceptions, and assess the books.

To aid in the understanding of Hughes as a gifted author, this writer believed it would be most worthwhile to interview the author to learn of the process in the composition of a story. This was deemed to be particularly valuable in regard to her science fiction stories, for it would help create in children a deeper awareness of the imaginative power of the mind at work. Hughes (1982g) has mentioned that "writing is a very lonely business, even writing for children", for "you confront your inner self sitting all alone at a desk with a pile of blank paper in front of you" (p. 6), wondering where to begin. For children it would be the opportunity to encounter the writer as artist, a shaper of words and ideas whose creative works are exciting and believable.

Review of Author Studies in Children's Literature

It is becoming increasingly apparent that literature for children is of significant import, a model for later literary appreciation. As such, scholars have begun to devote more attention to the author's works and craft. Jones (1977) focused more definitely on the literary work than the author herself. In her study of Madeleine L'Engle's A Wrinkle in Time, style and content are
noted, such as the use of well known precepts and quotations, the employment of allegory, the numerous allusions to Alice in Wonderland, and elements of the fairy tale which run through as a thread. Jones also concentrates on what she perceives to be the central philosophical and social themes of goodness and idealistic concerns, and of the importance of being an individual with rights.

Elizabeth Ann Rumer Hostetler (1981) examined the relationship of an author to her work in her study of Jean Fritz. The study, unlike that undertaken by Jones, is primarily a profile of the creator of such works of historical fiction as The Cabin Faced West, Early Thunder, and Brady. Hostetler concerns herself with a biographical retelling of Fritz's life, focusing on the influences on her decision to become an author which are then woven into the background of her tales. She also touches briefly on the historical novels which children enjoy reading and how an author's life has impact on the books written.

Two authors have undertaken to profile the author Lloyd Alexander. John McGovern (1979), like Jones, has chosen to examine an author's works, principally, the Prydain Cycle, which chronicles the adventures of Taran, an assistant pigkeeper. He concentrates on whether the criteria for heroic fantasy are met, if characters and events are inspired by the Welsh legends found in the Mabinogion, adhering to the characteristics which are the hallmarks of high
fantasy. He further suggests the relationship between an author and his writings be undertaken. In contrast, Jim Jacobs (1978) did an in-depth, author-centered biographical portrait of Alexander. Detailed and penetrating, it reveals not simply Alexander's attitude to his work, but also his world view.

A sensitive, insightful portrait of Katherine Paterson has been undertaken by Christy Slavik (1983), who has extended her perceptions of the role of the artist to direct classroom application. Therefore, the literary analysis of the works, the author's comments on the novels, and the writing process are linked to the educational implications for the books under consideration, enabling teachers and students alike to participate in the rich, aesthetic experience that literature has to offer.

Recently there have emerged commercial publications which have aided in clarifying the central vision of authors' works. One such is Campbell's (1985) fine, incisive, and thoughtful assessment of Robert Cormier's writings. She penetrates the writer's seemingly bleak universe to reveal a core of hope, commenting on Cormier's strength as a stylist, and exploring structural devices which enrich the deeper meaning of his novels. Cormier is also presented as a human being, allowing the reader an insight into how his "willingness to think things through, to face up to the absolute truth without cynicism or bitterness" - are qualities which give his
work strength and integrity" (p. 11). Cormier's abilities as a "brilliant storyteller" (p. 121) is clarified in Campbell's book which has been hailed as a landmark by literary critics.

Charlotte Spivack (1984) comprehensively examines LeGuin's writings for children and adults in an analytical and critical manner. Her organization, primarily chronological, traces the development of LeGuin's fiction from her earliest novel, Roncannon's World, to The Beginning Place, including her short stories, poems, and essays, dimensions usually neglected by critics. LeGuin's early life is briefly touched on, revealing aspects which were influential in the writer's later career in the world of words. Spivack's intention is "to help the general reader understand and appreciate the range and quality of this writer's literary achievement" (Preface). Like Campbell, she comments on character, style, imagery, structure, and, in this instance, mythopoeic imagination, which inform LeGuin's fiction. Spivack maintains that LeGuin transcends these distinctive elements to offer a thrilling personal vision of a universe" (p. 161) which resonates in the mind.

Scope of the Study

Interest in science fiction has accelerated over the years for a variety of reasons. While there is no precise definition of this genre, its history would indicate that its roots can be traced to fantastical elements found in such early works as Lucian of
Samosata and Voltaire. Writers like Shelley, Poe, Verne, and Wells have exerted a profound influence on the genre. Science fiction for adults which reflected prevailing mores and societal trends has also been mirrored in the writings for children and young adults. As a genre, science fiction has slowly discarded its tarnished image as pulp literature to emerge as writing which is experimental and innovative. Although Monica Hughes' science fiction is heir to a tradition which is rooted in earlier eras, her works are rooted in contemporary society. As fine literature, her works are insightful and well-written, revealing dimensions of human nature. Her stories are exciting, providing a stimulant for further thought on a number of issues of universal concern. Such an author issues an invitation to explore her varied galaxies, not simply the realm of science fiction. Young readers need to encounter superior literature such as that of Hughes, which effectively bridges the gap between the child and adult worlds. To explore her works students require the assistance of discerning educators who would sensitively guide them so that literary connections can be made. When students learn about an author such as Hughes and her writing process, their own reading experiences are immeasurably enriched. In seeing links between and among works, in perceiving how an author's ideas are transformed into believable works of fiction, students become more reflective readers. Educators
also need to be knowledgeable about Hughes' writings so as to be able to help their students. The purposes of this study are to identify the writings of Monica Hughes as being worthwhile and appropriate for children and young adults, to see how she transforms ideas into works of imaginative fiction, to relate biographical information which inform the stories, and to apply literary criteria in assessing Hughes' works in the various genres in which she writes. In addition, suggestions for classroom implications which enable students to broaden their horizons by focusing on literary connections will be presented.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I contains the statement of the problem and its significance.

Chapter II examines Hughes' background and the influences on her writing. How she transforms ideas into exciting fiction is also undertaken.

Chapter III explores Hughes' historical and realistic fiction writings.

Chapter IV examines the writer's science fiction to 1982.

Chapter V scrutinizes her later science fiction and short stories.

Chapter VI offers educational implications for guiding educators and students in their appreciation and understanding of Hughes' tales.
Chapter VII summarizes the study and details the conclusions made by the investigator.
CHAPTER TWO
BACKGROUND OF AUTHOR

Like the writers Alan Garner, Rosemary Sutcliff, and Ursula LeGuin, Monica Hughes has always valued her privacy. She neither courts publicity in the media nor reveals herself through her own writing. On the other hand, she has made no attempt to be unduly secretive, and her basic biography may be gleaned from interviews and other published records. What is she like as a person? Her appearance may be described as slim, shoulders slightly rounded (the result of an arthritic condition), not very tall, greying hair encircling her head like a fitted cap, twinkling, alive dark eyes, and a radiant smile. In personality she could be characterized as gracious, witty, empathic, compassionate, rational, knowledgeable, wise; a woman of strong moral convictions. It is her own belief, however, that only her fiction, not her biography, is of interest to the general public. Her personal life in Edmonton, Alberta, with her husband of thirty years and their four children, is consequently a private matter.

Born in Liverpool, England on November 3, 1925, Monica was the elder of two girls born to the mathematician and amateur
astronomer Edward Lindsay Ince and his wife Phyllis. In the following year, Monica, only a few months old, was taken to Cairo, Egypt, where her father, whose specialty in mathematics in a rather abstruse branch of differential equations, was offered the Chair of Mathematics at Cairo University. It was there, too, that her younger sister Elizabeth was born in 1927.

Nearly six years later the family returned to England, and while Edward Ince was teaching at Imperial College, London, Monica and Elizabeth began their formal education at Notting Hill and Ealing High School, an excellent girls school and still considered "the best" (Hughes, 1983, February). After two years the family moved to Edinburgh where her father taught at the university and Monica and her sister attended a convent school. The school, evacuated to the west of Scotland when war broke out in 1939, proved to be less than a pleasant experience. Therefore, in the fall of 1940, the girls transferred to a boarding school in Harrogate, Yorkshire, where Monica remained for two years and her sister for three. Graduating at a youthful sixteen in 1942, she completed a year of math at the University of Edinburgh. Her father did not live long enough to see his daughter graduate, having died in 1941. By now, the war raged fiercely and, as she recollects: "I was too young to do anything and was longing to
be old enough to do things. So far as I was concerned, that year at the university was a kind of putting in time" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986).

Hughes' keenly felt longing to be a part of what she considered the real world of action prompted the youthful enthusiast to join the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1943, where she remained till 1946. Initially involved in decoding and breaking ciphers, her work led her into meteorology. She found it fascinating to be out in the air field, reading instruments, making maps, sending out coded messages of the hours and weather in the north of Scotland and over Ireland.

The war's end saw Hughes, like countless others, pondering her future. At that time job opportunities for women were not as diversified as they are today. On the advice of her mother's friend, an education consultant, she was steered toward dress designing. Later, she was employed as a dress designer and theatrical costumier in London. But an adventurous streak drew her to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), a land that had more sunshine than England but where English was the mode of communication. Arriving in Bulawayo in 1950, she worked first in a dress factory, and later as a bank clerk in Umtali.
After two years in Rhodesia she returned to England for a period to be with her family. But for this writer-to-be, the prospect of warmth and sunshine once again beckoned, away from the cold and gray of England in its post-war slump. So, in 1952, Hughes decided to explore the exciting, unfamiliar Australian world via Canada. Instead of crossing Canada as planned and journeying onward to the land of the kangaroo and koala, she was impelled, through "a mixture of greed and inertia" to remain in Canada (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986).

In Ottawa she accepted a most interesting position as a laboratory technician at the National Research Council in Structures Laboratory Mechanical Engineering Division where the C-100 fighter plane was undergoing rigorous tests. Reading strain guages, testing wings for fatigue, reducing figures to the useful data engineers required could have proved laborious. Instead, endless, riveting discussions over coffee and lunch breaks about the existence of life on Mars, the possibility of flying saucers, ESP, and the world in general, made her "look forward to Mondays" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986).

Meanwhile, her personal life moved in new directions as well. She met Glen Hughes who was working for Ontario Hydro on the St. Lawrence power project in Cornwall, Ontario. Despite "a
courtship of distances" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986), they were married in 1957. The marriage meant the end of her job at the Research Council but it marked the beginning of a long, happy relationship which still continues. Her dedication of Blaine's Way to her husband is a tribute to that marriage bond.

When Glen left Ontario Hydro and joined the Federal Government, citizenship branch, they moved to London, Ontario. Two daughters, Elizabeth and Adrienne, had been born to them by this time. Russell was born in London in 1962, and Thomas two years later. In 1964, Glen was transferred to Edmonton, Alberta, in charge of the western provinces, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. And it was in Edmonton, Hughes says, that "all my creative instincts have suddenly jelled," (The Children's Book Centre, n.d., n. pag.) crediting 1971 as being a pivotal year, for it was then that she turned to writing full time.

**Childhood Reading Influences**

Hughes' introduction to "the realms of gold" of which Keats spoke are vividly recalled, for the books that first caught and held her spellbound were those read aloud. Her early memories include an English translation of a French tale called The Adventures of Ludo, the Little Green Duck which made an enormous impression
when it was shared with the sisters by their father. Read aloud often, the story reduced both the children to tears to Hughes learned very early that "books were cathartic ... There's this marvellous sadness that was very comfortable ... as opposed to misery, and that you could really enjoy it with the tears copiously pouring out of your eyes" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986). Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter*, a collection of cautionary tales in verse first published in German, which, despite Harvey Darton's (1982) description as "The Awful Warning carried to the point where Awe topples over into helpless laughter" (p. 243) nevertheless succeeded in terrifying this sensitive child. The anonymous English translation, *Slovenly Peter* (n.d.), which depicted the graphically gruesome "great, long, red-legged scissorman" who visits little thumb suckers "and cuts their thumbs clean off, - and then,/you know, they never grow again" (n. pag.) still conjures up fearsome images of long-bladed, sharp scissors in her mind.

Hughes credits her father, whose eclectic reading helped broaden her intellectual horizons, with fostering her love of books. A collector of first and limited editions, he filled their home with the fine and the rare. An excellent reader, the musical cadence of his Welsh forbears reflected in his gentle,
sensitive renderings, he transformed Sunday afternoons into
delight. In the drawing room, despite the "coal fire in the
grate that scorched /The girl's/ skins painfully while the drafts
eddied around /Their/ backs" (Hughes, 1983d, February), Lorna
Doone, Robinson Crusoe, Kidnapped, Treasure Island, Catriona
came thrillingly alive. So did some of the less well known
selections like The Ingoldsby Legends, a book of gruesomely comic
stories in verse and prose, in the manner of medieval legends and
folktales which included the narrative "The Jackdaw of Rheims,"
and Ernest Bramah's translation of Kai Lung's Golden Hours, a
pastiche of romantic Chinese fiction told tongue in cheek. Harm-
less hilarity mingled with the horrifying, from the macabre Tales
of Mystery and Imagination by Edgar Allan Poe, with their fierce
Arthur Rackham illustrations to Stevenson's Travels with a Donkey
in the Cevennes, Jerome K. Jerome's Three Men in a Boat, G.K.
Chesterton's novels and essays, and the poetry and essays of
Hilaire Belloc.

She was often ill as a child with chronic bronchitis and laryngitis,
which Hughes attributes to the resultant change from the hot,
dry, Egyptian climate to the fog and damp of London. Her grand-
mother would read to her from Dickens to alleviate the tedium of
hours spent confined. Especial favourites of her grandmother
such as Oliver Twist, Pickwick Papers, Great Expectations, A Tale of Two Cities, A Christmas Carol, "are inextricably mixed in Hughes' memory with the roar of the gas-fire and the smell of Friar's Balsam in a steamer" (Hughes, 1983d, February). The words and ideas of Dickens, though not always understood sank into her subconscious, surfacing when needed to enrich her understanding of language and literature. Years later Hughes was to speak not simply of quality book selection but of the importance of imparting beloved treasures which may initially appear difficult for a child's comprehension. That one should "read something that turns you on and let the child come up to meet you," for then it becomes a learning experience as well as terrific" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986) could well characterize Hughes' own writings for children which seek to challenge, to enable them to discover and relish the new and the different.

Hughes still retains an abiding affection for Notting Hill and Ealing High School which she credits as nurturing her deep love of literature. Here, the stories of Early Man, of how he discovered fire, lived, and ate, were read aloud and then substantiated by visits to the British Museum to view the now infamous skull of the Piltdown Man and stone-age burials. For Hughes, it was not an intangible transmission of knowledge: "There was this sense of reality.
There were these people we were talking about" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986). In an essay titled "Connections: A Human Approach to Language Skills," Hughes (1986c) reflected on that school and the extraordinary nature of story to provide a cohesive, holistic comprehension of the universe. As she contends: "All these fascinating facts were like pebbles rolling around in my head, but the mortar that held them together and bound them into aggregate was story.... Story is the consciousness of what it is to be human" (p. 57). Ruth Sawyer (1970), the late master storyteller once wrote that "there is a kind of death to every story when it leaves the speaker and becomes impaled for all time on clay tablets or the written and printed page" (p. 59). To take the tale "from the page, to create it again into living substance, ... is the challenge" (p. 59) that Notting Hill so admirably succeeded in accomplishing.

To Hughes, the Norse sagas appealed, for "they chime in the Anglo-Saxon mind more than the Roman and Greek which is the very Mediterranean mind" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986). A graphic instance of the compelling, persuasive power of story emerges in her remembrance of one of these myths. In recounting how her whole class was suddenly and
totally enthralled at the death of Baldur the Beautiful, weeping unashamedly as one, she recalls: "That was my first exposure to a hero in the mythic sense and it made a profound impression on me" (Hughes, 1983d, February). This participatory grieving, evoking Hepler's (1982) "community of readers" has significance for today's complex pattern of living and learning. As Tooze (1959) elaborates:

"Storytelling is a creative act in which the story garnered from the stuff of life passes through the teller, as light passes through a prism of glass to reveal all the colors it holds, to return to the stream of life itself. It becomes part of the life stuff of all the listeners as it completes the cycle (p. xvi)."

Through such storytelling then, which completes a cycle, a cycle in which all the facets of sensitive awareness, of insight, and understanding come into play is print and literacy fostered.

At Notting Hill, winning the class prize the first year there and being presented with Ransome's Swallows and Amazons prompted in her the realization "that magic lay between the covers of books, and all that was necessary to do to partake of the treasures was to open the covers and plunge in" (Hughes, 1982g, p. 8). And "plunge in" she did. Awarded Swallowdale as the class prize the following year, with diligence and keen persistence Hughes acquired, through birthday and Christmas requests, the
entire Ransome collection which she still possesses. The tales were adored for Ransome opened the door to an imaginary world of place where children were allowed to do the things they wanted. He created an incredible sense of freedom "devoid of adult supervision or interference" (Hughes, 1986c, September) which is demonstrated initially "in a symbolic handwashing that sets the tone" (1986c, September) at the beginning of Swallows and Amazons.

Then, a different kind of magic enchanted the eight year old who had just discovered the works of E. Nesbit, a "blue-bound treasure trove hidden among the other books on the shelf beneath the window" (Hughes, 1985c, p. 65) of her London classroom. This was the world of faerie, of fantasy, of writing more introspective than that of the self-reliant fun-filled adventures of the happy children "messing about with boats" in Ransome's Swallows and Amazons series. That remarkable Edwardian, E. Nesbit, whose stories were without rancor, reflected not the sense of privation endured in her personal life, but rather, provided an opportunity for imaginative play and exuberant fancy. Words from The Enchanted Castle, "there is a curtain, thin as gossamer, clear as glass, strong as iron, that hangs forever between the world of magic and the world that seems to us to be real ... resonated in
Hughes as no other words have done so powerfully before or since" (Hughes, 1985c, p. 65). The magic of E. Nesbit as an explanation of the inexplicable, helped the child mind grope toward an understanding of this puzzling cosmos with its un-answered questions in a way that had been denied her by grownups.

As she was to discover again at a future time:

... the clue to the labyrinth of these mysteries lay in the making of connections, and that connections were forged out of the knowledge and discovery and imagination of other people who had been struggling with the same questions, and that these were to be found in books (Hughes, 1986c, p. 58).

And so, sometime in her teens, the precise moment long forgotten, when Hughes was struggling to understand a book her father had given her, James Jean's The Mysterious Universe, the initial insight into the magic of E. Nesbit was again a strongly felt presence. As she "fought her way through the difficult sentences and the alien concepts" one of those blinding flashes of "intuitive understanding" was arrived at, a sense "of completion, of patterns at last understood and the key to mazes found" (Hughes, 1985c, p. 65). That the world of magic still existed was affirmed then, and many times since "in the marvellous symmetry of solar systems and atomic structures, ... in the superb simplicity of DNA, ... in the random steps - and yet how could they possibly be random? -
that led to the successful propagation of bread wheat" (Hughes, 1985c, p. 65). This other magic became far more satisfying, for it became "knowledge for the sake of knowing, seeking for the sake of finding; ... joyful and fulfilling" (p. 66).

But this "joyful and fulfilling" world first experienced at Notting Hill was rudely shattered with the family move to Edinburgh at age ten. Thrust into a school environment whose curriculum, rigorously designed toward the examination system - the Junior and the Senior Oxford Certificate, and beyond, the world of University, proved exceedingly painful. Here, learning was not perceived as a wondrous world of reaching into and exploring. The child, whose amateur astronomer father had inspired her with the solar system's beginnings, who, when presented material "gobbled it up, not understanding half of it, ..., but ... could read books, ..., by a sort of process of osmosis," (Hughes, 1982g, p. 8) now inhabited a school universe devoid of the rich literary stimulus that sustained her inner landscape.

To compensate for "terminal starvation of the imagination" (Hughes, 1983g, February) she traipsed off to the local Carnegie library which she recollects as being "a monstrous old building, dark and inconvenient" (1983g, February). The initial impetus was her mother who suggested the child go on walks to
improve the pallor in her skin. Instead the studious looking, skinny, spectacled child gravitated to the adult section of the library since the reading material in the children's section was sparse, "beneath contempt" (1983d, February). There a veritable feast was discovered in Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, Anthony Hope, the Dumas brothers, Baroness Orczy, the Brontes, Stanley Weyman, George Eliot, whose *Daniel Deronda* was considered more appetizing fare than *The Mill on the Floss*. With genuine amusement, Hughes recollects that her dear mother, totally unaware of these activities, approvingly noted only that the child had more color in her cheeks upon returning from her "walks."

Research has demonstrated the intrinsic role that exposure to books and reading aloud plays in the development of a literacy set and in the making of a reader (Butler & Clay, 1979; Cohen, 1984a, 1984b; Clark, 1976, 1984; Cochran-Smith, 1984; Goodman, 1984; Heath, 1983; Heath & Thomas, 1984; Holdaway, 1979, Teale, 1984; Wells & Wells, 1984). Gordon Wells, in *The Meaning Makers* (1986), further implies: "What I want to suggest is that stories have a role in education that goes far beyond their contribution to the acquisition of literacy. Constructing stories in the mind - or *storying* as it has been called - is one of the most fundamental means of making meaning; as such, it is an activity that pervades
all aspects of learning" (p. 194). Hughes would concur with this view, adding that storytelling gives meaning, a mythopoeic sense to the universe.

Research shows that as parents read aloud to children, the children in turn develop a sense of story and an appreciation for literature. Butler (1979, 1980), Crago & Crago (1983), Smith (1979), Taylor & Strickland (1986), Trelease (1985), White (1984) attest to the bonding that occurs between parents and children but more especially to the enrichment provided. For Hughes, being read aloud to was not simply a matter of decontextualizing language, or of noting its role in written language, its usefulness in the acquisition of literacy, and it was more than a way of remembering past events, of giving validation to a child's own experience so that it may be applied to new stories. For her, the childhood stories gave form to her existence, providing a strong, firm, and unyielding beauty which has helped her in her writings.

On Becoming a Writer: Other Influences

When posed with the question "What impelled you on the lonely path of being a writer?"; Hughes emphatically replies: "Because I had no choice. Yes, I think it answers itself" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986). Ever since the age of ten when she used up all her "emotional energy dreaming what
it would be like to be a famous writer," Hughes realized as she grew to adulthood, that "writing is an activity that is totally independent of sex, money, position, place. It's a thing you do inside your body which puts it in a different category. You don't have to be trained to be a writer" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986). The impulse to write was there but a long apprenticeship was first served.

Writing as an activity, was "no enormous leap of unbelief to make from the point of being a reader to being a writer" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986) because both her mother and father wrote books. Her father wrote mathematical treatises, while her mother, in Egypt, surrounded by servants, and with time to spare, composed short stories, even having a couple published. The pen, as working tool, was no stranger to the household when Hughes was a little girl.

A telling anecdote from the *Just So* stories given her in childhood provided Hughes with a relevatory experience. It was in the tale of how the alphabet was created that she learned the import of what lay behind Kipling's creation - individual letters made words. Her elation at this discovery is reminiscent to that of Helen Keller in her unravelling of the secret of communication. The history and the beginnings of language comprehended at an
early age later suggested that writing was of significance, that it had the ability to affect, to refine thinking.

It is to Notting Hill and Ealing High School that one must again look for its pervasive influence on the impressionable young mind of a future writer. Besides their own writing, students wrote on clay and wax tablets with a stylus, learned cuneiform, wrote out the cartouches of Cleopatra and Ptolemy, studied hieroglyphs, were taught about the Rosetta stone; in consequence, the relationships amongst different writings was magically effected. Insularity was not in evidence in this milieu, for in viewing the Magna Carta and the Domesday Book on field trips that could be described as extraordinarily stimulating, Hughes was exposed to the reading and writing in early cultures using a Montessori type approach which was part of the school ethos.

That this school exerted a deep and profound influence on the small child, a magnetism unconsciously apprehended and only articulated in adulthood can be attested to in the following comment by Hughes which acknowledges the inextricable bond linking storytelling, reading, and writing:

I've only just begun to go back and work out why all this has happened: a sense of the magic of words as an essential part of the process of becoming more human, beginning with Man in his cave, painting the creatures that
roamed the Ice Age world and then putting his hand onto the wall next to them. We'll never know, but I think myself that this gesture or "autograph" was designed to gain power over them: "I am here, they are there, and I in my way as Thinking Man have more power than they have who can't draw anything." Then Man would tell stories to explicate his environment, his relationship to other men; tell of the terrors of birth and death and loneliness. And little by little all that storytelling moves forward until we come to the time of writing down one's memories - cuneiform, the hieroglyph, and then finally the simple rounded A, B, C's, which are the same forms as we saw in the Domesday Book and the Magna Carta. And they carried this magic of formed letters, words, thoughts forward right into the school and the library of today. That's the whole power of man's self-discovery in the written word (Hughes, 1982g, p. 7).

For Hughes then, the sense of writing as a powerful activity was an intrinsic part of being human; letters, syllables, words were special. Even now, when she writes she thinks: "It's still magic, isn't it?" These scrawls on paper - and you don't have to think about it as your hand actually puts it [words] down - are an incarnation of one's deepest thoughts and emotions solidified into two dimensions right there" (p. 7).

Hughes' desire to become a writer surfaced at age ten, when marvellous book titles were written down, with the inclusion of chapter one at the heading of a notebook, but little else. From those first tentative scribblings emerged some work in her teens,
short articles, later an autobiographical first novel, drafts of several others, undertaken only when the mood struck or in spare time. In a creative search for self, energy was expended in embroidering, weaving, creating fine hangings that decorated her walls.

Then came 1971, a crucial year in Hughes' life. Her youngest, Thomas, was now at school, and, with some time at hand, a deliberate choice was made to begin writing in earnest. Until then, every piece had addressed an adult audience, reflecting their values. Encountering a book titled *Writing for the Juvenile and Teenage Market* by Jane Fitz-Randolph on the new acquisition shelves of the Edmonton public library, Hughes had no idea she was "meeting [her] future" (Sharpe, 1983, p. 33). It was then she learned of the incredible renaissance in children's writing. So little of anything worthwhile written for children had been a part of her own growing up, aside from the classics and E. Nesbit. In the main, the Angela Brazil type of portrayal featuring jolly, bouncy English girls in boarding schools preoccupied with organized sports like field hockey, employing slang expressions such as "what a blossomy idea!" seemed to prevail. And now, a new world had been unveiled to Hughes and it was glorious.
Influenced by Cameron's (1969) *The Green and Burning Tree*, Hughes began reading voraciously the best in children's literature. Books of criticism and essays of children's literature like those by John Rowe Townsend followed. Totally captivated, she learned that in that genre was to be found more adventurous, interesting, experimental writing than was the case in the adult sphere. Importantly, these works imparted a fine sense of values to their child audience. Recognizing that children must also contend with tragedy in their lives, these writers had nonetheless succeeded in investing their tales with hope and dignity. It is a view with which Hughes would concur as noted in an essay entitled "Creating Books for Children" which she submitted to Ruth Osler, coordinator of the Toronto Public Library for inclusion in a book to be published celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Lillian H. Smith, an internationally renowned librarian. Quoting from a long forgotten source Hughes says: "You may lead a child into the darkness but you must never blow out the candle" (M.I. Hughes, personal correspondence, July 3. 1985). This aspect exemplifies Hughes' own writings, permeating her fiction for children.

At that time, in the 1970s, much adult fiction reflected existential values, a pessimism where anti-heroes were in vogue.
For Hughes, the modern adult novel had become "the author's load of despair enlivened by sex and violence" (McDonough, 1982, p. 78). To be in the company of Rosemary Sutcliff, whose *Sun Horse, Moon Horse* she has read several times, Alan Garner, the two Penelopes, Lively and Farmer, William Mayne, Jane Gardam, Leon Garfield, and more recently Ruth Park, proved marvellously refreshing.

Not averse to reading other authors, Hughes is quick to acknowledge literary influences on her work. She believes the great writers are exceptional teachers. In that essay to Ruth Osler she draws parallels between her attempts at writing in Canada with the struggles of such Australian writers as Patricia Wrightson and Ivan Southall who "speak with a clearly Australian voice in a country whose literature was for many years imported" (M.I. Hughes, personal correspondence, July 3, 1985). Marvelling "at the apparent ease with which Wrightson has integrated the Dreamtime mythology of the aborigine into the world of modern Australia," Hughes, with characteristic humility, poses the question: "Could I ever write a book as good as *The Nargun and the Stars*?" (M.I. Hughes, personal correspondence, July 3, 1985). Dickinson's (1976) *The Blue Hawk*, described as "a remarkable feat of the speculative imagination" (Townsend, 1983, p. 332) is, for her, an exemplary piece of craftsmanship. One
scene in particular in which the boy, alone, trains the hawk, could have proved ponderous, being a lengthy description. Yet, as Hughes appreciatively notes, in the hands of a skilled writer like Dickinson, the lack of dialogue and non-verbal interaction between the two characters mesmerizes the reader. If Hughes has problems with some aspect of her work, she looks to such writers for inspiration.

In a recent *New York Times Book Review*, Anatole Broyard's comment appropriately captures the spirit of Hughes' world: "The contents of someone's bookcase are part of his history, like an ancestral portrait, .... A person's bookcase tells you as much about him as J.D. Salinger's famous medicine cabinet" (February 22, 1987, p. 13). The books that have consciously or unconsciously shaped Hughes' thinking and her writing line the shelves. The range is varied, much like that of her father's universe. Twentieth century scientific selections like Asimov's *The Universe*, Sagan's *Cosmos*, reside alongside poetry by Tennyson, Browning, Milton, Byron. The works of Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Iris Murdoch, G.K. Chesterton, creator of the inimitable Father Brown, Somerset Maugham, Ursula LeGuin occupy the same mantel as Kenneth Clark's *Civilization*, Bennett Cerf's *Modern American Humor*, Ardrey's *The Territorial Imperative*, Irving Adler's *The
New Mathematics, and Bronowski's The Ascent of Man. The admiration reserved for writers of children's literature, extend to such adult authors as Anthony Burgess, John Fowles, the two Margarets, Laurence and Atwood, Timothy Findley, and Paul Scott, suggesting the link between the two worlds is not tenuous; rather, a writer like Hughes admits their reciprocal nature has enriched her work.

**Writing Patterns**

It becomes apparent that the hardest problem for almost any writer is settling down to write each day. As William Styron has observed: "If writers had to wait until their precious psyches were completely serene there wouldn't be much writing done" (Matthiessen & Plimpton, 1981, p. 272). It is a view echoed by another writer Alberto Moravia who trusts in inspiration but does not wait for it (DeDominicis & Johnson, 1981, p. 218). Hughes also does not subscribe to the notion that writing is an activity accomplished when the mood strikes, or when the muses inspire.

Using the analogy that to be a brain surgeon is the result of hard work, so too, Hughes suggests, must a writer impose stern self-discipline in order to compose. Unlike Robert Cormier whose "hours of hush" (Campbell, 1985, p. 24) are his best working time,
Hughes finds her most productive outpourings are early in the day. For four hours, from eight till noon Monday to Friday she is totally engrossed in creating new worlds, relegating household chores to a secondary position. During the summer she writes in the shade of a tree in the back yard. The afternoons are preferred for long walks, a fairly common occurrence among writers, for it is a time of reflection, a release from tension. Thomas Wolfe sometimes roamed the Brooklyn streets all night before writing; likewise does Hughes who of her after lunch strolls mentions: "When I get stuck I prowl - summer is nicer for prowling, as I can get in a little weeding" (The Children's Book Centre, n.d., n. pag.).

From that pivotal year in 1971 when she determined to commit herself to writing for young people, Hughes has not wavered from her daily routine. It may well be that this strict regimen contributes to her tremendous productivity.

**Composition of the Story**

In the introduction to *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews* Malcolm Cowley (1981) perceives that there appear to be four stages in the composition of a story: "First comes the germ of the story, then a period of more or less conscious meditation, then the first draft, and finally the revision, which
may be simply 'pencil work', as John O'Hara calls it - that is, minor changes in wording - or may lead to writing several drafts and what amounts to a new work" (p. 7). Hughes' writing would seem to follow this pattern. For anyone concerned with the craft of fiction it is therefore hoped that by glimpsing how some of her stories are invented, how ordinary events can be transmuted into works of the imagination, the writer for children undergoes a process similar to that experienced by the writer of an adult audience.

The expanding field of writing research is providing educators with valuable new insights into the way writing is learned and how it might best be taught. For the classroom teacher to demonstrate the manner in which an author like Hughes writes would prove insightful of the creative act. As Hughes has said: "Part of being a writer is that you see things that are just a little out of the ordinary" (C.H. Fondse, personal correspondence, September 11, 1986).

a) Germ of Story

At readings, deluged by children with such questions as "Where do you get your ideas? Did you have to do a lot of research about space before you could write The Keeper of the Isis Light? What advice would you give to someone who wants to
write books?" Hughes answers: "All writing comes from an author's own experiences, not from a book of plots, ready made... Yes, I have read many, many books and articles on space, but how my characters act and interact comes from my own knowledge of people..." (McDonough, 1982, p. 78). The germ of her stories originate from many sources, an emotional reaction, a remark overheard, a family incident, and a newspaper clipping. "Almost always it is a new and simple element introduced into an existing situation mood," as Cowley would add (1981, p. 7). He quotes James who described it as "the precious particle ... the stray suggestion, the wandering word, the vague echo, at a touch of which the novelist's imagination winces as at the prick of some sharp point," for "its virtue is all in its needle-like quality, the power to penetrate as finely as possible" (Cowley, 1981, p. 7).

With Crisis on Conshelf Ten, the "precious particle" was a programme on television, a Jacques Cousteau special which detailed an experimental setting up of an underwater habitat in the Red Sea where scientists or engineers could live for two or three days at a time while working at pressures of three or four atmospheres, thus avoiding the hazards and wasted time of having to decompress and surface after very short work intervals.
Reflecting on what it would be like if men lived permanently in habitats in the ocean depths, if that would be home, the crucial question evolved: What would it be like to be a boy growing up in such an environment? There was Hughes' first real plot question.

For The Keeper of the Isis Light, the "vague echo" arose from a simple connection, a newspaper cutting of David, the American boy from Houston, who, because of a deficient immune system, lived in a glass bubble. Till his death he had spent his entire life isolated from every other human being in a sealed, sterilized room. Unlike Crisis on Conshelf Ten which began as a question posed, Keeper was born of an image developed over time, that of the child in an artificial environment, not being touched, loved, played with, cuddled, except through the equivalent of a space suit.

The inception of Sandwriter was even less clear cut. One evening, on television, during the airing of a show on Israeli art the camera captured Marc Chagall's magnificent stained glass windows. Feeling tired, Hughes had lowered the sound track, and was just watching visuals when there appeared slender sandstone sculptures in the open, as if in a desert. From the fleeting impression of desert issued a "totally illogical, irrelevant
statement. Oh, that must be the entrances to one of their houses. Just like that" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986). Being a writer, she quickly scribbled, describing the statues and wrote "Entrance to houses? Desert people?" which she then filed for later reference. Hughes (1985c) has stated:

Just as the children in The Enchanted Castle pick up the magic ring without any idea of its true meaning and power, so sometimes I 'pick up' a piece of information quite unrelated to anything I am working on, but which somehow vibrates with hidden energy. Then I know that I must work on it and attempt to construct the unknown whole from the tiny fragment of it that I have in my hand (p. 67).

From such vague beginnings then, grew the story of Sandwriter.

Sometimes a domestic crisis, like that of her son Russell who played truant from school to go hunting, can precipitate strong feelings that resonate in her subconscious and initiate her need to try to find the right words to create the same state in her readers. Questioned regarding his escapade after his return from the Swan Hills northwest of Edmonton, the sixteen-year-old replied "I don't know Mum, I had to." The simplicity of the remark provided the impetus for Hunter in the Dark, sparking initial thoughts like "Why do guys go hunting? Is it a rites of passage that doesn't make sense nowadays?" In Mike
Rankin, Hughes found a hero to whom she could speak, who would answer those kinds of questions.

There was a time when Hughes, upon completion of a book, would wonder what her next story would be. Now she feels at her "wholest" when writing so she prefers having another project already waiting in the wings. If, on rare occasions, she is without a clear-cut design she delves through her idea file. One such file idea produced Ring-Rise Ring-Set, a tale that did not come to her in a sudden, blinding flash of revelation. The idea file has become for Hughes another "precious particle" employed in her writing.

b) Process of Meditation

Angus Wilson refers to the process of the book or story beginning to assume its own specification as "the gestatory period" (Millgate, 1981, p. 256). In Hughes' case, the meditation may assume a conscious stance in which an initial question asked of herself precipitates many other questions from which the design of the tale emerges. As she elaborated:

I begin with a question to which I do not know the answer. This becomes the spring-board which gives me the energy to explore and perhaps, though not always, find out possible answers. In this fashion the question: "What would happen if a super-computer running a city were given complete decision-making powers?" became
The Tomorrow City. "Who would survive some unnamed disaster that destroyed civilization and how would they do it?" became Beyond the Dark River, while an exploration of the human psyche was the springboard of the Isis trilogy ....

It was in this way that I developed Devil on My Back from a suggestion in an article on computer technology that one day microprocessors might actually be attached to the human body rather like contact lenses or artificial limbs. I had to explore this unknown through questions. In what kind of society would such devices be widely accepted? How would such a society develop? Under what pressures? What might be the result of using these devices over a long period of time? Little by little the pieces of the jigsaw appeared and then had to be fitted into place (Hughes, 1985c, p. 67).

In Crisis on Conshelf Ten and its sequel Earthdark, the questions were strong enough to make each story happen: "What is it like living under the sea?" On the moon?" As Hughes maintains: "In a sense the story rides upon the answer to [to those questions] very easily" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986). Since the ideas were clear cut, and the setting defined, it was decided a community in the near future, a pioneer culture, would be established. The mistakes that could happen on the edge of technology, it was surmised, would be far more interesting to fashion than a society already stabilized. Details like what would be consumed for breakfast in an undersea environment, the kind of clothing required to facilitate easy
movement, the dangers of going out of one's depth, how to get to school, and why the sea does not cover the land could then be answered by the protagonist.

Plot slowly began to assume form in a logical manner. Parallels and contrasts began to figure between the two locales, moon and sea, with Kepler as protagonist being shaped physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally by his environs. A series of small climaxes was devised, leading to the final resolution. In the course of this process the cast of minor characters was arrived at so that the entire writing of Crisis assumed a holistic approach.

Finally, library research was undertaken to determine what life was like beneath the waves. For a book of science fiction like Crisis about a hundred titles were perused, from which approximately fifty were culled, unlike Hunter in the Dark for which about ten books on leukemia and the psychological and sociological problems of teenagers experiencing illness were closely read.

Hughes (1985c) has described the necessity of clearly establishing background in science fiction to create plausible tales or else students, as readers, would remain uninvolved. She says:

Before I begin to write I must also find out all about the background and mise en scène, so as to make this strange world as real as possible for the reader. This is a much harder
task than it was for the writer of fairy tales, or even for the earlier writers of science fiction. The incantation 'Once upon a time' is no longer a sufficiently strong magic for most readers. We are all so knowledgeable nowadays, so sophisticated, that it is not enough to rely upon a blanket 'suspension of disbelief.' The writer must work through the reader's knowledge of the scientific reality of today, and that through careful research, before taking that further step into unknown territory. Ray Bradbury's Mars is a magic realm that never was and never could have been, but that did not matter when he wrote it. It was accepted into our mythic geography long before the reality of Mars was transmitted home in stark photographs from exploring satellites. If Ray Bradbury were to write The Martian Chronicles now, I wonder if they would still work? In fact, I wonder if he would have been able to write those poetic descriptions in the face of the stark reality? (pp. 67-68).

The gestatory period for The Keeper of the Isis Light was longer and more convoluted. The gradual evolution of the sense of aloneness was developed through such questions as "Is loneliness part of the human process?" "Is there a difference between being isolated and being lonely?" "Would David be like a boy who was born blind?" Born blind meant being inconvenienced but not missing a sense one had never possessed, whereas suddenly thrust into an unknown world after recognition of an earlier one could dramatically tear a life apart. Not wishing to write of David, considering that to be an unkind, terrible invasion of privacy, Hughes' mind ranged. Where else on earth were people totally
isolated? Lighthouses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came to mind but were quickly discarded since an historical tale could not support the momentum required. The sense of isolation had to come from the perspective of today's child, whose immediate response to instant communication is realized through television, radio, helicopters, and the Concorde.

It was then that Hughes discovered the power of science fiction to answer unanswerable questions by providing an alien milieu. All that was needed was to posit a girl in her teens on a planet far from Earth, totally isolated and alone. But all was not simple, for logic had to intercede. How had the girl landed at that destination? Long before a developed character, plot, or real background had been determined, Hughes was required to establish the reason for Olwen's solitary yet perfectly happy existence on Isis before the advent of the spaceship with the Earth travellers. As the character was sixteen when the story unfolded, careful, logical, thought-through questions issued forth: What had her parents been doing on Isis? Why were they dead? How could a very young child be alone on a planet without being brought up by the equivalent of wolves or apes?

To overcome the insurmountable difficulty of having a child alone on the planet, one that was not a Tarzan-like clone, Hughes
compromised with the introduction of Guardian, the robot. He was
to become an essential element of the story, because, in
rational terms, Olwen would not have learned language without
his programmed capabilities. Since language is the prime
requisite of a writer to enable communication with characters,
Guardian became surrogate parent, protector, and friend, though still
adhering to the basic truth of Olwen as the only human on Isis.
As Hughes (1985c) has explained:

> Once I know, through research or self-questioning, the place and circumstances in
which a story is going to unfold, then I have
to delve into the background of my characters
to find out who they really are and how they
are likely to react to the situation and crises
I am going to impose upon them. Notice I say
'how they are likely to react.' I am never
completely sure (p. 67).

Only when Guardian and the other characters were delineated could
the story allow for the development of a clash between the girl's
comfortable, serene life and the invasion of strangers so that
in not being alone she would find true aloneness.

Sandwriter was to have been a technical book on desertification and its effect on our fragile planet. But the vague,
fleeting, television images of Chagall paintings and deserts
were impressions which returned when she happened upon a
description by a woman journalist who had been to the hilly
Negev region. It was then Hughes reevaluated her own conception of deserts as being flat and sandy. This recounting of deserts reminded her of their mystic nature as places of meditation, where in Judaeo-Christian tradition people experienced awe and a sense of the divine. The thought unconsciously induced in Hughes the picture of an ancient priestess, Sandwriter. This visualization of a woman writing her name in the sand while the billowing winds tossed the grains of sand about was seen not as a symbol of erasure, but of becoming one with the land and the wind. From such amorphous beginnings evolved the story.

With a title and one minor character, but no plot, Hughes reverted to drawing, a technique sometimes employed to correct errors in mental processes. In this instance she began drawing a chart of a journey, wondering meanwhile if it would be a long or short one. Images of contrast followed. Slowly there emerged the story of the heroine Antia from a rich culture being coerced into a marriage with Jodril of a materially poor one. It was decided that the journey from a poor to a rich culture would be meaningless in terms of development of the story, whereas the reverse would induce in Antia a sense of culture shock, so dramatizing the central conflict.
As she wrote, Hughes developed the characters, drew many pictures, worked out the basic geography of the two continents but did not know the mystery at the heart of the story. It was only when Hughes' unconscious self through the shaman Sandwriter told Antia the basic mythology of the planet, that the secret at the story's core could be revealed. A mixture of research, sound logic in developing the background, and trust in her subconscious enabled the 'technical' book to be written. The meditation here, a mixture of conscious and unconscious elements, "as if a cry from the depths of sleep were being heard and revised by the waking mind" (Cowley, 1981, p. 9), could be applicable to both Crisis on Conshelf Ten and The Keeper of the Isis Light as well.

c) The First Draft

Armed with the facts from research, in possession of a clear idea of characters and background to the story, with a skeletal plot outline, perhaps a chronology of events, a map or drawing of a place or building figuring in the tale, Hughes is prepared for the actual task of writing. The first draft, written in a linear fashion, is completed quickly in longhand on lined paper. At this point Hughes does not concern herself with the finer details in the process of writing. A turn of phrase, the
use of a particular word, spelling and punctuation, and even factual matters are disregarded unless the facts may prove to be a stumbling block to the resolution of the actual plot. The main consideration at this point lies in swiftly committing to paper the multiplicity of thoughts revolving in her head. When characters in her mind begin to hold private conversations with each other it is determined that the moment of putting pen to paper has finally arrived. But as Hughes (1985c) clearly states: "When the writing actually begins it is an exploration into unknown territory for all of us, creator and created alike" (p. 67).

In the course of a morning between two and three thousand words are written. Only if Hughes hits a "block," if her hand is sore from writing, or if she has been away from her work for some days does she transcribe the seeming scribbles onto a typewriter. Then only is she ready to revise.

d) Revision

The transcription itself becomes an editorial process for Hughes who often vocalizes as she types, changing sentences around or searching for a more descriptive word or vivid phrase. Generally, revision using this rough, typed copy does not require a great deal of work because the form of the novel is fairly clear from the outset. This aspect was not true of her
early works as a novice writer, but time and practice have honed her writing skills. Now it becomes more a matter of sharpening details, checking style, and fleshing out character if necessary. The corrected copy is then sent to the editor, on whose professional judgment she relies in the event of a flaw in the plot or in character development that may have been overlooked. These editorial changes become seldom more than the rewriting of a word or two, or perhaps a paragraph.

When proofreading, Hughes checks to note what is repetitive or banal and accordingly corrects. Interviewed by Rosalind Sharpe, Hughes was asked if she had to simplify her ideas for her readers, and her reply was unequivocal: "In terms of structure and vocabulary, I certainly don't find myself making compromises. I don't think of a sentence and then simplify it before I type it" (Sharpe, 1983, p. 33). To her, it is unthinkable that in the act of creating one premeditatedly writes for a child audience because self consciousness results, and writing becomes a trite endeavour.

**Sequels**

Hughes is more interested in discovering new people, novel environments, and fresh adventures. The selfish, pleasant part of a writer's life is in that creative stage, she maintains. To write
sequels is to traverse the same territory, which is not challenging. Sometimes, though, she is inadvertently led into a trap, as in the case of Devil on My Back. Her editor then wrote saying the text was fun, but it was necessary to find out more about a particular character or incident. That is how she conceived of The Dream Catcher, a complete novel in itself, which also continues the story of Lord Tomi and Rowan, and is as dramatic a read as its predecessor.

Sandwriter, on the other hand, had no such outside influence. On the very last page when the wise old priestess talked, the future was suddenly unveiled and she prophesied that the child of Antia and Jodril was to be the next Sandwriter. It was not the ending Hughes had conceived of, arising instead out of her subconscious, but it begged for a sequel, which will occur at some later point. Similarly, with The Keeper of the Isis Light, the idea of what it would be like to live on the planet Isis three generations hence flashed into her mind during the writing. And so was born the trilogy, impelled by inner forces, by a questing mind intrigued with the notion of how people had adapted to their environment, where all but the very oldest had forgotten they originated from an Earth home.
Generally, Hughes is not an ardent supporter of reading or writing sequels, disliking the cliff hanger approach that would characterize such works as those written by John Christopher. Instead, she prefers each book be entirely complete, self contained, and independent of the others, like Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising* series. As such, each of her books which have sequels can be read as separate tales.

**Summary**

A supportive home and school environment nourished and provided the impetus for Hughes' writing career to flourish. A disciplined writer, she works prodigiously to create works of fiction. Although she has an idea file, the impetus for books come from varied sources, and the challenge lies in turning them into believable stories. Research and self-questioning are of particular importance in regard to her science fiction writings. The meditative process during writing, which employs conscious and unconscious elements, assumes significance. Contrast and conflict figure in her writings, creating the needed tension. Sequels are born of two influences: those requested by an editor, or those generated through internal reflection.
CHAPTER III
HISTORICAL AND REALISTIC FICTION WORKS

A serious novelist of ideas, Hughes is in the prime of her writing career. An examination of her works will be undertaken, discussing her literary achievements according to the various genres she writes. The years ahead will undoubtedly extend that chronology. This chapter will explore Hughes' writing in two genres: namely those of historical and realistic fiction.

Historical Fiction

The appearance of Hughes' (1974) first publication, the novella *Gold Fever Trail: A Klondike Adventure* was scarcely noted by reviewers and not even acknowledged by critics. This slim volume was written at the request of a local publisher and had two stipulations. First, it was to be about sixteen thousand words in length, and it also had to be accomplished in a relatively short time period. After all the rejection slips Hughes had received, she was delighted to comply and completed the story in six weeks.

This Canadian historical novella concerns two children, thirteen-year-old Harry Thorpe and his eleven-year-old sister Sarah, who face being separated after their mother's death. Their father is away in the Yukon prospecting for gold, his whereabouts unknown.
Rather than risk being sent to orphanages they stow away on a ship from Victoria on Vancouver Island, to Skagway, later following an overland route to the Klondike. After assorted adventures they are eventually reunited with their father and in the bargain retrieve some gold for themselves.

In her book, *The Republic of Childhood*, Sheila Egoff (1975) makes a "wry commentary" on the general status of Canadian historical fiction for children, saying:

that a consideration of the subject must begin with a question: are these books really historical fiction?

Historical fiction is surely nothing less than the imaginative re-recreation of the past. The good historical novel involves the reader in a bygone era, dramatically and emotionally. The reader, and especially the young reader, must be made to identify with the past, to live it in his mind rather than to study it.

'Living in the past' depends squarely and solely on the writer's evocative skill. The parcelling out of so much history and so much fiction cannot create the conviction that a successful historical novel must have...

No matter what the design of the framework--firm...or loose...-- the historical novelist is primarily writing fiction. The adjective merely particularizes the noun, as does 'science' in science fiction and 'detective' in detective fiction (p. 95).

Couture (1982) quotes Judy Sarick who maintains "the story ... is the important thing. The historical information seeps in through
osmosis" (p. 4). It is the story brought to life through the "imaginative re-recreation of the past" that is not in evidence in Gold-Fever Trail: A Klondike Adventure. The tale appears contrived, leaving the reader lacking empathy for the two children in their rigorous adventures, a feeling more ably captured by Anderson's (1980) The Journey of the Shadow Bairns, especially in her vivid and compelling description of the stowaway experience of her two protagonists.

Despite the focus on detail the frenzied madness of that turbulent era is only partly evoked by Hughes' book. In one scene Sarah, distressed, observes men plowing through mud to cross the White Pass, a route they perceive to be a short cut to their destination. She wonders at their not travelling over the steep Chilcoot, where the rocky terrain is eventually easier to traverse. Replies the corporal in prosaic fashion: "Tell them? Bless you, you can't tell them anything. They're gold crazy, every one of them" (Hughes, 1974, p. 21). The hazardous conditions of the treacherous, forbidding rock face, the howling winds, indeed, the grandeur of the setting are blandly set forth. Even Harry's anecdote of the two unreasoning partners no longer able to endure each other's companionship, who divide provisions by cutting sacks through the middle and spilling flour all over, does not convey the heightened emotions that gold dust can engender.
The recreation of a particular historical setting in an imaginative manner is the first requisite to any work of historical fiction (Burton, 1977, p. 164; Trease, 1976, p. 40). In this book it is insufficiently delineated. Consequently, the intense excitement generated by gold fever is not communicated, and so characters in the story "move in a kind of featureless limbo" (Burton, 1977, p. 164), leaving the reader disengaged from the action. For instance, it is learned that the children's father, Mr. Thorpe, had lost his arm in a sawmill accident which meant the destruction of his dreams of wealth. Ashamed to return home, he begins to drink. When joyfully reunited with his children what follows is a dull catalogue of his tribulations, ending with this self-knowledge: "I've hunted for gold all my life, and it's been nothing but a will o' the wisp leading me into the marsh. Gold is a cheat for the most part" (Hughes, 1974, p. 90). But it is knowledge that elicits no sympathy, for Thorpe is never made to appear a forceful, vital presence whose mad lust for the yellow metal had caused him to forsake all else. Sutcliff (1973) believes that "history is People", with whom children could identify because they are alike "under the changing surfaces" (p. 311). It would be difficult to feel any kinship with Thorpe because as a character he remains passionless. Even the protagonists Harry, and Sarah, emerge as stock figures in a landscape, their adventures less than arduous.
However, the notion that no one culture possesses all knowledge and that one can learn from other minority groups is first discovered in this story. These ideas will later be elaborated upon in books like *Beyond the Dark River* and *The Ghost Dance Caper*. In one episode when Harry has scurvy and is extremely ill, it is Tsa-u-mak, Sarah's Indian friend who employs her knowledge of Indian lore to cure him. First she enables Sarah to reach her brother who lives a fair distance away by using the stars as a guide. Then she administers spruce bark tea to the stricken boy, which the other prospectors later acknowledge as being valid medication.

Although the basic premise of the tale is solid, the writing is not memorable. The overall impression is that the book was designed for an uncritical market and has little else to recommend it except its Canadian content. As one reviewer, Marion Brown (1974), has stated: "I only wish that the author had spent twice as much time and effort to make the book twice as long and put some meat on the bones of a good, but rather skeletal story" (p. 50).

As with *Gold Fever Trail*, the novella *The Treasure of the Long Sault* (1982f) may be faulted primarily for its abbreviated structure which tends to make the plot contrived and introduces more ideas and situations than can be adequately disposed of in such a short compass. One could hope that it would offer imaginative, exciting episodes for the casual reader of historical fiction. But such is
not the case. Even the serious minded reader of the admittedly fine later works would not readily confess to turning the pages in breathless anticipation. In short, neither this nor its predecessor comprises first-rate reading with definite intimations of greatness.

Though Gold Fever Trail has status as her first published selection, The Treasure of the Long Sault was actually an earlier piece written at the beginning of the 1970s before any of the science fiction and contemporary novels had established Hughes' reputation. Hughes submitted the manuscript for Treasure to a local publisher after reading an advertisement in the Alberta Authors' Bulletin seeking Canadian historical material for a fifth grade supplementary reader. That publisher bought and retained the work. In the meanwhile Gold Fever Trail was commissioned by the same firm and published first. Not till eight years later did Treasure emerge in print.

The story revolves around contemporary figures, the two young Anderson brothers, twelve-year-old Jamie and fourteen-year-old Neil who set out to prove that one Alexander MacAlpine was not a traitor. He had been so labelled by his compatriots and the United States in the events of 1813 and the Battle of Crysler's Farm. It seems that when apprehended, MacAlpine protested his innocence. He maintained he had sought a treasure despite circumstantial evidence
to the contrary which suggested his involvement in traitorous activities. The two boys, after hearing this anecdote about MacAlpine, undertake the search for this ancient treasure along a portion of the St. Lawrence riverbed, temporarily drained during construction of the Seaway. The treasure turns out to be an archeological find, a five-thousand-year-old Indian medicine bag. The investigation also helps uncover the grave of a long dead Indian chief of high standing, and the boys are feted in grand manner.

Egoff (1975) cites Hester Burton who once commented that "'readers of historical novels have some right to know how much of what they read is history and how much fiction'" (p. 114). A child not apt to have such historical perspective has this distinction made known in the introduction. Hughes informs the reader that the characters MacAlpine and his friend McIntosh are entirely imaginary and their adventures during the battle are fictitious, but that the descriptions of the work on the Seaway and Power Project, Upper Canada Village, and the locations of certain towns are factual. It is also noted that this novella, in commemoration of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Crysler's Farm, "is dedicated to the Canadian and American Nations whose common memories of old unhappy far-off
things and battles long ago not only contribute to their separate heritages and traditions but form a bond between two friendly peoples" (Hughes, 1982f, Introduction).

Of recent years there have been well-written Canadian novels with historical content like those by Barbara Smucker and Janet Lunn (1981), whose *The Root Cellar*, though fantasy, weaves a haunting tale which incorporates the American Civil War. However, *Treasure* is an illustration of the very charges Egoff (1975) has levelled at Canadian historical writing in earlier times. She has stated that:

By and large, Canadian historical fiction for children is a succession of failures. Its virtues have been in the reporting of history, its failings have been literary. Canadian writers may claim full marks for the conscientious and accurate assemblage of dates, names, and events. But on the whole the plots are manipulated, and the characters invented are papier-mâché. Even the historical personages have a rubbed out appearance. These books do recount an aspect of the past but they seldom recreate it. In paraphrasing Canada's history, our writers fill their pages with irrelevancies and snippets of lore. They decide to parcel out so much history and so much narrative, and in doing so they usually weigh the parcel in favour of history. And how they love to teach it! Gratuitous dates and place-names abound, along with 'how-to-do-it' information: how to prepare pemmican, to make candles, to tar a deer hide, to construct a Red River cart—all interesting in themselves but misplaced in the pages of a novel (p. 98).
Information regarding the events leading up to the Battle of Crysler's Farm is relayed by Neil to the reader via a catalogue of events. One such section is narrated in this manner:

North of the St. Lawrence here the United Empire Loyalist have just settled and begun farming. There are little groups of houses, a kirk, maybe a schoolhouse. The King's Road is a broad dirt track running from Montreal, west to Kingston and York, parallel to the river. The river is still the easiest form of transportation, except in the rapids section. North of the river is nothing but wilderness.

Over in Europe Napoleon is running wild. He's already run out of money and sold Louisiana to the Americans to get more funds for his war to conquer Europe. The British have just got him out of Spain, but in 1812 he turns his eye towards Russia. England is constantly threatened with invasion and runs a blockade to cut off France's supplies. The Americans are angry at the blockade which interferes with their trade, but eventually an agreement is reached between the British and the Americans (Hughes, 1982f, p. 15).

The sense of communing with history is wanting. Rather than illuminating the past this book, like its predecessor, simply "provides extra-curricular material for the junior historian" (Egoff, 1975, p. 113).

As heroes the boys are likeable, yet remain one-dimensional. Red-headed Neil, imaginative, obsessed with clearing the MacAlpine name, for "finding the truth" (p. 54) and "undoing all that prejudice" (p. 54) reveals nothing in his background that would
impel him to take up this cause with such passion. His brother Jamie, "hundred percent practical Scots" (p. 3) who "/knows/ exactly what he /wants/ in life" (p. 3) remains genial but no more. Mrs. MacAlpine simply becomes the mouthpiece through whom the supposed traitorous exploits of her husband's grandfather, Alexander MacAlpine, are disclosed. As reader, one is led to question why she chose to remain at Weaver's Landing and do nothing about the problem especially as she so keenly felt her ostracized position in that society.

The book becomes a series of contrived episodes to enable Neil to unearth the treasure. First he discovers Alexander's corroded metal box, whose contents provide the clues. Then he just happens upon evidence in one of the little cemeteries along the St. Lawrence which shows that Bruce McIntosh had died at the Battle of Crysler's Farm. Neil surmises that Bruce had probably been caught in the crossfire and was unable to return to provide witness that both he and Alexander were in search of treasure. Finally, the iron box in the dry river bed containing the four thousand year old medicine bag is conveniently discovered and Neil is rescued in the nick of time by his father before the area is flooded.

That Treasure of Long Sault represents most of the faults of which this genre is liable cannot easily be dismissed as an
isolated mistake. Part of the problem lies in the dearth of Canadian historical fiction writing. Publishers, eager to fill gaps in the Canadian social studies curriculum, do so by commissioning writers to fill the requirements. As such, "sales appeal is not synonymous with intrinsic merit" (Egoff, 1975, p. 99). And so, Egoff's (1975) description of the state of Canadian historical fiction in general applies equally to both The Treasure of Long Sault and Gold-Fever Trail: A Klondike Adventure, despite the latter being the more well-written of the two stories. As she says:

The formula seems to call for the following requirements: history must be deadly accurate; history must take precedence over fiction; don't narrate - just report event after event after event; don't worry about style or characterization; limit the vocabulary to the number of words specified by educationalists as normal for the age group (p. 99).

To paraphrase Egoff, it is perhaps fairest to say that these books be viewed simply as an attempt to make history a more agreeable subject for study in the same way that arithmetical rules may be more easily committed to memory when chanted in rhyme (p. 101).

However, an interesting aspect does emerge in The Treasure of the Long Sault. The boys learn "prejudice will always run one step ahead of the truth" and the best you can do is to go on believing in the truth yourself and hunt for it" (Hughes, 1982f, p. 89).
Hughes, in effect, says there are no easy answers, a view more fully realized in her later science fiction writings.

Hughes herself has acknowledged that in these, her fledgling works, she was still following the chapter by chapter approach suggested by Fitz-Randolph's Writing for the Juvenile and Teenage Market. She knew she wanted to be a craftsman yet was bored with such "little adventure stories" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 11, 1986). Still, as she concedes, "for the beginning writer the very hardest thing to do is to find out ... the well crop from which plots are drawn. It is a bottomless well, granted, but you can spend a lot of time looking, dowsing ... if you like" (September 11, 1986).

Hughes' third foray into historical fiction has been Blaine's Way, published in 1986. It began with an Explorations Grant from the Canada Council, which made research of the initial material possible. The book in its final form was undertaken while she was writer-in-residence in the Department of English at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. The story centers around Blaine Williams who recalls his vexatious, troubled childhood in rural Ontario during the Depression. It soon develops into a young adult rites of passage novel. Blaine's way takes him from his provincial roots to adolescence at the onset of World War II and his participation in the battleground of Europe while still only eighteen.
A tape recorder and a stack of tapes are devices used to frame the story. Beginning in the present, through flashback, the tale moves into the more recent past, that of the 1930s and World War II for almost the entire book. It is unlike *Gold-Fever Trail* which is set wholly in the gold-rush time frame, and *Treasure*, in which the past is reconstructed by contemporary figures through snippets of lore and pieced-together clues. It could be termed a bridge book, spanning both the historical and realistic genres, with greater emphasis on the former.

As a work of historical dimensions it can be considered a more successfully realized piece of writing. Part of its believability arises from its first person narration by grandfather Blaine Williams. The retelling, precipitated by a request from Blaine's granddaughter Susan, is a record of his own childhood. This taped recollection is a legacy, to be lovingly bestowed upon his own great-grandson also named Blaine. Unnerved at first by the "tape silently winding from spool to spool," the sound of a nearby train jolts the old man into unlocking "the dam across the memory of those growing up years" (Hughes, 1986a, p. 10). It is suddenly Cornell, Ontario, the winter of 1930. The reader is afforded a glimpse of the world of the Depression as witnessed through grandfather Blaine's eyes.
His personal reminiscence, begun as a six-year-old, enables observation of Blaine, his parents, and assorted characters as they weave through the bleak Depression landscape. But the memories are not the rose-coloured ramblings of a sentimental old man looking across the passage of years. On the contrary, they are painful, sometimes bitter-sweet, depicting the detrimental effects of grim, economic forces that shape and irrevocably change lives. Blaine's father, proud, gentle, is reduced to auctioning off his farm to move back with his more prosperous in-laws, a return despised by his dreamer wife who feels stifled in the family bosom. Her hatred of the endemic poverty that crushes spirit is poignantly captured by her son: "For a second I saw her the way she must have seen herself, in a washed-out cotton dress and an apron made from a sugar sack, her shoes split at the sides, past mending even if we could have afforded to pay the cobbler" (Hughes, 1986a, p. 23). Increasingly embittered, her marriage disintegrating, she escapes to Toronto, never to return. But she does not depart without first exhorting Blaine to take the train himself someday. While one questions this complete abandonment of family, the conditions that allowed such an appalling action ring true.

Blaine's father, deeply hurt at his wife's decision, yet making no move to stop her, retreats into self instead. In
convincing fashion, Hughes sketches a man of inaction, unwilling to let anyone hurt him ever again. He even distances himself from his son, becoming a mere shadow. Blaine notes his father's idea of happiness, so unlike his own, is to have "things ... on an even keel with no actual disasters" (p. 168), a perspective drastically changed by the Depression. This is a very private man, whose drawback is his inability to express affection, however deeply felt. Only once does he let down his guard long enough to make the painful admission to Blaine that he had never really understood either his son or his wife. That occurs when Blaine is leaving for war, and even then his father controls emotion. As Blaine anguishes: "He shook hands, for God's sake. My Dad" (p. 169).

The other family members are drawn with deft economy. There is Greatgramma, tiny yet snake like, whose tongue, "thin like a lizard's," would "flick out and moisten her wrinkled lips" (p. 65). She thrives on family arguments. There is Grandpa Cameron, for whom life is a challenge to be confronted with strength and vigour. Even when his barn burns and a lifetime's work destroyed, he plans on rebuilding. Then there is Gramma, a woman of generous disposition who acts as buffer when family squabbles arise. Aunt Rose is waspish at first but softens after marriage to Charlie her unassuming husband. He tactfully relieves Grandpa Cameron of the
heavier burdens of farm labour. They are, like the others, characters who begin to take on life.

It is a measure of Hughes' surer grasp of her characters that the reader begins to identify with Blaine and his determined struggle to escape from his narrow, country environs. His work in the tobacco fields to gain "escape money" (p. 137), his growing awareness of the opposite sex, and his adolescent yearning for adventure, which culminates in his lying about his age and enlisting in the armed forces, are more persuasively described. As a protagonist he is more rounded than those of Hughes' previous historical fiction. One views a boy imperceptibly growing into manhood, surviving the blight of the Depression and the deaths of friends like Susan and John, who leave a void in his life. Despite his anger at his mother's desertion, his "Dad for not being what he was; a failed farmer, a quiet and unforceful man ... at life and the depression, which made the future so hopeless" (p. 120), he learns he "is going to live till it hurts" (p. 134). More like his grandfather whose resilient spirit he has inherited, he survives Dieppe, thereby demonstrating that he has made his way to manhood at eighteen.

The pitfalls of mere reportage of historical events to the exclusion of literary merit are less prominent in this novel. Little details evoking life in rural Ontario, like maple tapping,
the Eatons Catalogue which affords a glimpse of the luxurious world out there, and wash day before the advent of sophisticated machines, combine to make for an accurate, realistic, clear narrative. Even the Dieppe landing is more graphically pictured. The terse sentences convey the intensity of battle. As Linda Grandfield (1986) has said: "Some of Hughes' best writing - highly visual, full of sound-effects and sensual detail - is to be found in the battle scenes" (p. 24).

But the strength of this story lies in the central and recurring image of the train as symbol both of promise and blight. It becomes a link "travelling across Ontario, stitching together all the little communities into a single patchwork" (Hughes, 1986a, p. 150), briefly uniting people in the common bond of celebration at the arrival of the King and Queen. For Blaine's mother the train is new life, a feeling communicated to her son, who, like her, leaves on one to "find the real world, the world where dreams come true, where we aren't poor anymore" (p. 11). But the train is also destruction. Emissions of coal sparks from its engine burns the wooden fences that farmers can ill afford to repair. It is the grim Reaper, for it kills like the Toonerville Trolley whose "stubby chimney ... /puffs/ asthmatically" (p. 68). Worse still, it is deceit, delusion. In the midst of battle with the smell of death everywhere, Blaine realizes the passenger train he
had boarded for more exotic locales was simply the old Toonerville Trolley which never stops "for the likes of us, for life's failures" (p. 59). Finally, the train emerges as an image of healing, returning Blaine to his family, scarred but ultimately sure of where he truly belongs. The train becomes an embodiment of the quest, an element that will figure largely in other books by Hughes. For Blaine it is the journey into selfhood. Woven into the fabric of the story, the train becomes a cohesive, unifying image.

The concluding paragraphs, the closing frame, is a return to the present. The recording, ending with advice from the elderly Blaine to his great-grandson to enjoy life, includes a warning not to let greed and fear overwhelm. While the cautionary note may not be seen as didactic in tone, the plea from one generation to another to abide by honest values is more credible than that of Mr. Thorpe's speech to his children in Gold-Fever Trail about the futility of pursuing the ephemeral. "Good Canadian historical fiction must do more than impart the distinctive flavour of Canada's historical development. It must give history a universal meaning ... and in so doing reveal man's hopes and aspirations," says Egoff (1975, p. 110). Blaine's benediction provides that more universal dimension.

One could speculate on the reason for Hughes' more successful venture in evoking an era. Although she did not reside in Canada
as a child, the effects of the Depression affected Britain, where she grew up. As well, World War II, being within the realm of her own experience, possibly allowed for a more accurate re-recreation of the past, as did her childhood reading of the classics which are incorporated into the story. But more importantly, it may well be that, to quote Hester Burton (1977), Hughes has discovered that:

the prime object of writing an historical novel is an exercise of the heart rather than the head. It is an exploration of the imagination, a discovery of other people living at other times and faced with other problems than our own. In other words, it is an extension of the author's human sympathies (p. 164).

Realistic Fiction

Novels about Indians of long ago are much more numerous than those in the contemporary setting. It may be that Indians represent one of Canada's few national themes, which, like the Mounties and the building of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, can quickly awaken interest and feeling. Requiring "as little explanation as the Cavaliers and Roundheads in England or the Yanks and Rebs south of the border - figures that are part of the emotional consciousness of a nation," so too are the Indians for whom "an emotional sympathy ... is predetermined" (Egoff, 1975, p. 116). Whatever the reason, there is a greater incidence of books on early Indian life. Fewer stories on modern Indian ways and
problems have been witnessed in children's books since the beginning of the 1960s.

A tale like Hughes' (1978) *The Ghost Dance Caper* may well be one of those that represent a catharsis, an amends for the way native peoples have been treated. Used as a school text in Australia, this book, her first modern novel set in present day Alberta, is essentially Canadian in material and theme. It examines a boy of mixed descent, father a Blackfoot Indian, mother white, who searches for his identity, attempting to reconcile the conflicting demands of his native and white ancestry. Tom Lightfoot's father, a successful lawyer, has travelled far from his Indian roots in terms of the white man's ideal of success and he wants his son to follow suit. But for the boy, almost fourteen, a better solution must be sought, one that effects a truer, more harmonious balance between the two heritages.

To achieve this equilibrium he turns to his great-grandfather, Samuel Lightfoot, the venerable old Indian chief of the Blackfoot reservation. As the boy's mentor and lifeline he must help Tom find himself:

> I don't feel like a man. I don't even know who I am, Great-grandfather. How'm I going to decide on a career that I'm going to be stuck with for the rest of my life when I don't even know who I am? It doesn't make sense ... Great-grandfather, help me (Hughes, 1978, p. 7).
It is an eloquent plea, one which those caught between two worlds would recognize. The old man acknowledges this cry from the heart, nodding "formally as if he were accepting a commitment" (p. 7).

In a review, Kenny (1979) charges that in this effort to picture the straddling of two worlds the author has "equated/ success to being a lawyer or a doctor or an Indian Chief," and this aspect "should be eliminated rather than reinforced" (p. 52). But what is overlooked is that, as characters, Tom's father and mother reflect contemporary values in which advancement is evaluated in monetary and professional gain. His father never hesitates telling his son how he "had to claw /his/ way up every inch with nobody to help" (Hughes, 1978, p. 2). His symbol of arrival is a Lincoln Continental. What Hughes conveys with economy is a man who may have deferred to the white man's competitive ways but at a price. When he takes Tom for his weekly visit with the old Chief, he only stays long enough to wish his aged parent goodbye, but his eyes do not smile: "They /too/ desperate, like the eyes of a trapped rabbit" (p. 4). The guilt is twofold: deliberate omission of his Indian roots, yet anguish at relinquishing them. He may straddle the two worlds uneasily, but his wife chooses to ignore the Indian world completely, referring to the reservation as "there" (p. 1). Her idea of accomplishment is to be found in
such trappings as a big house, and fine furniture. Only by determining what constitutes 'success' can the conflict within Tom be resolved. For him, success lies within self, in making his own decisions rather than having them imposed from without.

To help achieve this inner sense of satisfaction and new maturity, Hughes has created a strong character in Tom's great-grandfather. His relationship to Tom, central to the action, is genuine, warm, and loving. His face, "carved out of mahogany in deep lines and furrows" (p. 4), epitomizes the traditional Indian, faithful to the ways of his forbears. Even a simple event such as drinking tea is conducted with ceremony. He puts in the sugar and stirs four times, "the number sacred to the four cardinal points" (p. 4). Scorning the accoutrements that would signify to an outsider his cultural background, he lives simply. As he imparts to Tom in his frail, "winter voice" (p. 7), "Indian is inside yourself. How you feel, not what you hang on your walls" (p. 5). As a character, great-grandfather is reminiscent of the late Canadian Chief Dan George, possessed of dignity and wisdom.

But for great-grandfather to help Tom to choose the right path in life means the enactment of the Blackfoot Ghost Dance ritual. The "ghost bundle" is only obtainable from the local museum and he must retrieve it. The bundle, Tom reasons, is rightfully tribal property, for had not great-grandfather intoned
such sacred objects were "sold by those who had no right to sell them to those who had no right to buy?" (p. 11). The first part of the "caper" involves stealing the bundle, aided by his astute friend Peter Cummings. This is not as suspenseful as the scene in which Tom, alone, must return the ghost bundle to the museum under cover of darkness. His quick witted intervention in an actual burglary in progress, which culminates in a satisfying resolution, is taut and exciting. And although, as Kenny (1979) rightfully frets, "Tom never has to answer for the illegalities of his caper" (p. 52), he does learn a valuable lesson instilled in him by his revered great-grandfather. It is that "one has to learn that he cannot give to others what is not truly his to give" (Hughes, 1978, p. 120).

It is in this second part of the museum "caper" that faint echoes of Hughes' own childhood experiences can be seen skillfully embodied in the story. While trapped on the museum roof unable to get down, Tom looks at the Milky Way galaxy and speculates on its origin. The moment hearkens back to the time when Hughes' own amateur astronomer father helped her question the mysteries of the universe. But there is also a glimpse of E. Nesbit's spirit experienced by Tom when he reflects "there was a strange accepting kind of magic about this lonely rooftop under the starlit sky" (P. 110). It is the implied remembrance that the spell of other
worlds is not to be forgotten in contemporary society; rather they effect a complementary stance. Finally, the literature which in Blaine's Way is merely recalled for the purpose of shared enjoyment of the classics assumes here a more utilitarian role. Recalling David Balfour's climb to the tower edge in Kidnapped, Tom steps gingerly on the roof top, terrified at what could become a chilling reality should he not move carefully.

In this book Hughes comes closer to the Indian spirit than in either Gold-Fever Trail or Treasure of the Long Sault. The evocation of Indian beliefs as unfolded in the Ghost Dance, the myths relating to it, and the description of the 'sweat' that is part of the traditional rite are authentic, invested with dignity and mystique. Solemnity and reverence are observed not only when the bundle is opened to reveal the four "pokes" (p. 48) containing eagle feathers and four small brass bells on a thong, but in the enactment of the ceremony itself. The 'sweat' only superficially resembles a sauna, where Tom, in divesting himself of his garments, symbolically leaves his everyday concerns behind. It is a ritual purification several centuries old. In retelling Indian legends, Hughes acknowledges the mythology of Canada, rather like Patricia Wrightson, who has incorporated the aboriginal tales of her native Australia into her stories. One in particular, in which great-grandfather tells of the disappearance of the buffaloes, has a
stark, simple quality reminiscent of Sandburg's fine poem "Buffalo Dusk" (Hopkins, 1982, p. 26).

It is fitting that in his quest when Tom finally discovers his spirit, Hughes (1978) is able to borrow from the Indian world without sacrificing its essence. The bat, while "not exactly a kosher spirit symbol for an Indian", is appropriate for Tom because he is, by his own admittance, not a "kosher Indian" (p. 121). He now knows and understands:

That I do belong to two worlds. And that it doesn't have to make me muddled or split down the middle.... I can't be an Indian chief. I can't be a white lawyer. I can only be me. I don't know just what that's going to mean yet, but I think that now I know how to listen - to myself, I mean - instead of to everybody else telling me what I ought to do (p. 121).

It is an idea pertinent to contemporary Canadian society, but transcends its confines to reach the universal.

As she is to pursue again in her later works, Hughes says there are no easy answers to life. For Tom to try to live the Blackfoot way as it once was is unrealistic, for it signals one kind of death, that of a people who could be closed out in the modern world. Yet, if like his father's venture into the white domain he "/Fights/ for property, pushing to get ahead, ..., the tribe will also vanish. And what is a people without their
tribe?" (p. 46). It is a perplexing dilemma for a young man on the verge of adulthood to try and resolve. But Hughes leaves the reader with a note of hope in the person of great-grandfather. He may appear "a stooped Indian in a shabby red makinaw" (p. 122), but this Chief, who inside is "straight and slim and proud" (p. 122), will continue to help the young man on the path to self-discovery.

Few novels of modern Canadian life with its attendant problems have infiltrated children's books since the 1960s. Realistic fiction has assiduously avoided controversial subjects that proved complicated, shocking, or powerful. When brutality, suffering, and death were depicted, "it was the moral consequence thereof rather than the event itself that received chief attention" (Egoff, 1981, p. 33). Feelings of repugnance about the world "outside over there", to use Sendak's term, could then be kept in abeyance. A book like Fitzhugh's (1964) _Harriet the Spy_, Hunter's (1972) _A Sound of Chariots_, or Cormier's (1974) _The Chocolate War_ had yet to be written that would penetrate the Canadian psyche:

Almost none of the quite dramatic shifts in subject, taste, and style showed up in Canada.... Canadian children's books, whether deliberately or because of the innate conservatism of their writers, did not join the mainstream of current writing. While American (and to a lesser extent, British and Australian) children, as seen through the books written for them, were coping
with ineffectual parents, no parents, one parent, being unhappy, growing up, tuning in, dropping out, or brushing up against drugs, alcohol, homosexuality and racism, Canadian children were still visiting a lighthouse, crossing the barrens, discovering a cache of Indian relics, catching a bank robber, or getting a pony for Christmas.... (Egoff, 1975, p. 174).

Only in more recent years have writings emerged like Kevin Major's (1978) Hold Fast and Far From Shore (1981), which, as he says, "share the universal confusions and joys of adolescence" (Nilsen & Donelson, 1985, p. 55). Adding to this understanding of the adolescent milieu is Hughes' (1983a) Hunter in the Dark, a powerful, strictly contemporary psychological study which examines an adolescent's confrontation with his own mortality through the medium of a thrilling animal hunt. The book has been the recipient of many awards, including the Canada Council Children's Literature Prize, and has garnered favorable reviews.

The central theme, that of coming to terms with what life has meted out, is not just a poignant story of a young man's growth. As Hustak (1982) observes: "The power of the book does not lie in its originality - the theme has been used many times before - but in the way it observes behaviour and in its building of subtle characterizing details" (p. 47). Sixteen-year-old Mike Rankin's parents refuse to acknowledge or divulge the dreaded truth that their only child has acute lymphocytic leukemia. His mother's
unclasping of hands to be warmed by non-existent flames, his girl-
friend Gloria walking on ahead of him as if afraid of contamination,
and his father's uneasy advice that "after all, there's no need
to sweat till grade twelve, till you're thinking about university"
(Hughes, 1983a, p. 37) are subtle gestures of deception. But the
ultimate betrayal lies in such acutely observed details as Mike's
childhood recollection that Santa is a fabrication; the "red and
white ... costume, as limp as a corpse" (p. 53) is both garment
and a foreshadowing of his disease. That discerning eye also
extends to the landscape which predominates. It is "like the back
of a great sleeping animal, an animal whose muscles rippled beneath
a dense fur of spruce, pine and poplar" (p. 3). The pollution that
fouls the Athabasca River is covertly the metaphor for the ravages
of the disease that defile Mike's body.

That setting as the key to the story is evident. From the
first pages when Mike, angry at his parents for not being direct
with him, escapes to the Swan Hills in Alberta, to the concluding
paragraphs, the environment is of importance. Kertzer (1985)
rightly argues this relationship of self to place, place as
"other", is a structural and thematic device that can be seen in
other Hughes works like The Tomorrow City, Ring-Rise Ring-Set,
Beyond the Dark River, and The Keeper of the Isis Light. Death is
first seen as the "other", happening to Ali McGraw in *Love Story* but not to Mike himself. That viewpoint is broadened to include setting which is noted in terms of opposition. His parents' home, pristine, elegant, and glacial, is contrasted to that of his friend Doug O'Reilly which is warm, loving, and lived in. The hospital, like home, is the other, cold, quiet, and sterile. When Mike crosses over the ironically-named Freeman River to the wilderness, it is escape from self he seeks. There is tremendous relief at reaching this "other" place: "He'd done it! He'd got clean away" (Hughes, 1983a, p. 3), but the respite is temporary. For Nature as the "other" is implacable, unrelenting, and Mike must combat it for his very survival. Later he is to reject place as other; instead of opposition there is identification with that other sphere which embraces not only animal and those who are ill, but humanity itself.

The secondary theme of conflict against the wilderness, though of universal appeal, is very Canadian. Essentially dramatic in tone, it evinces one of the most distinctive and recognizable features of the Canadian panoramic outdoors, ruggedly familiar yet inhospitable, even alien. This aspect is also featured in some of Hughes' science fiction like *Keeper of the Isis Light* and *Ring-Rise Ring-Set*. Man's struggle with nature calls forth admirable virtues like endurance, self-reliance, courage, resilience,
loyalty, and tolerance, qualities to which children of every generation can respond.

The literary and cultural themes that Margaret Atwood (1972) has identified as 'survival' can be seen in Hughes' work in direct, forceful fashion. This decidedly Canadian pattern is apparent in the hunt. Mike's deer, symbol of manhood to be attained, is an initiation rite, like his wished for loss of virginity. Just like the identification tag on his wrist in the hospital he will tag the deer, signifying ownership: "You're mine, ..., you're all mine. And for today I'm God" (Hughes, 1983a, p. 129). But the instant the decision is made not to shoot, Mike "provides a key to an important facet of the Canadian psyche" (Atwood, 1972, p. 73). It is that in the Canadian animal story there is "a recurring moment ...; in it the hunter identifies with his prey as suffering victim" (p. 80). In the tacit admittance that the deer is salvation, that he need not run away from self, Mike reiterates the pattern of which Atwood speaks.

In the Canada represented by Hughes, the land is overwhelmingly larger than its people. Cosy domesticity rarely intrudes on the pervasive presence of nature, in its harsh, austere splendour. It is an environment seen in physical terms, with Mike overcoming it through perseverance and woodsman-like skills.
But where Canadian adult literature equates 'survival' with alienation, rigour, coldness, and hostility, this young adult book equates it with challenge, even a tempered elation. Mike, after cooking a meal in the bush, comments: "I think I might live" (Hughes, 1983a, p. 5), grinning at his private joke. When the wind suddenly extinguishes his fire, it could be one more cruel example of nature red in tooth and claw, but Mike will not relinquish his tenacious grip on life. As he coaxes the fire into new being, he urges: "Come on, ... Grow. Live. Save me" (p. 65). When it goes out again he doggedly rebuilds it, making Dylan Thomas' famous lines "do not go gentle into that good night;/Rage, rage against the dying of the light" a forceful reality.

Without veering into pedagogy Hughes imparts unfamiliar activities such as how to rekindle an accidentally dowsed fire when there are no matches and nothing dry for flint. The intimacy between Mike Rankin as hero and what he creates enables Hughes to escape the pitfall of giving obstrusive information and explanation that characterized her earlier historical fiction, and to a lesser degree, her realistic novel My Name is Paula Popowich. Credibility is not strained in the interest of narrative; rather her strength lies in the sense of measured pace and suspense invested in the tale. Hustak (1982), in describing her spare, economical style, relates: "Few writers can evoke hunting scenes more
trenchantly than she does" (p. 47). Such a feeling is evidenced in this account:

He looked through the scope. Where was it? Had he imagined something? A tangle of branches, seeming so close to his face that he flinched, swept across the scope as he slowly moved the rifle. There! Wasn't that it? A grey curve of rump in the circle of the scope. But was it his buck? Was it a buck at all?

He stood motionless, and then moved the rifle just a whisper to the right, so that when the head did come up she'd see it clearly. Come on.... Come on!

As last the head did come up, and his heart plunged in disappointment. The head was antlerless (Hughes, 1983a, p. 108).

It is in this novel that Hughes' uses of image and metaphor assumes a significance, far more effective than in Blaine's Way. "Dark" is successfully incorporated into the story, which, like Blaine's Way, uses a flashback technique. Here it is skillfully employed to interweave the year long endurance of his severe ordeal into the three-day expedition. By juxtaposing Mike's experiences in two places, home - hospital versus wilderness, "dark" is portrayed not only in physical terms such as the dying out fire, but also as unilluminated night, the dark wood of the new rifle. The dark is personified, animal-like: "That night the dark was worse than it had ever been before. It crept up on him and savaged him like a bear at a deer throat" (Hughes, 1983a,
p. 90). It is the darkness of parents who would seek to insulate him from those verities which are part of the human condition. Dark becomes representative not simply of a morbid, death-like state of existence, but transcends to emerge as "comforting," for the "enemy from whom Mike had been running for so long was in fact his friend" (p. 131). As a thread, "dark" gives direction and purpose to the work.

While reviews may question "the teenager's early naivete... in these medically alert times" (Hammond, 1983, p. 313), Hughes defends her stance. She wanted the protagonist to be the protected, single child of upper class wealthy parents so that the shock of reality would be more powerful. Mike's parents may have hurt him in small unknowing ways, but in the larger sense he was extremely protected. As Hughes maintains, there are innocents who still abound, vulnerable, and bruised, who, like Mike, must find out painful truths for themselves (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 12, 1986).

Through Mike's agony one sees how he comes to understand his parents, friends, and better still, himself. He discovers the real meaning of life, that it is the quality of existence which counts. While Kertzer (1985) may contend that the "triumph is deceptive" (p. 20) for Mike will die, Hughes does not deny that eventuality. What she does say is that "we go through life to
But in so doing there is the affirmation that life is to be savoured "or else ... it would become flat as bread without yeast, as tasteless as a wiener without mustard" (p. 130). The ending is not falsely optimistic, for Mike and the reader see that an acknowledgement of his own impending death is made when he finds he cannot pull the trigger and end the life of the beautiful whitetail buck. But with that recognition also comes the insight that it is living fully which counts. And so, the story transcends the usual formulaic "problem novel" with its emphasis upon physical and psychological traumas and becomes instead a sensitive, caring portrayal of adolescent fears and anguish, and of courage in facing the unknown. Sutherland (1986), who listed this book as one of the best in the period between 1979 to 1984, called it "a sad but not grim story, which speaks to the courage of youth with compassion and conviction" (p. 203). It is this "underlying integrity and ... sensitivity that eschews sentimentality" (Hammond, 1983, p. 313) which makes Hunter destined to be one of the most lasting and remembered of Hughes' writings.

As with The Ghost Dance Caper, which examines the search for identity, so too does My Name is Paula Popowich, another of Hughes' (1983c) works in a contemporary urban setting. Life has been simple for Paula Herman, eleven going on twelve, until her mother
decides to leave Toronto for Edmonton. The move is a result of her grandmother having bequeathed her home to them in her will. In Edmonton Paula begins to unravel the mystery of her past, and events get complicated. Why does her mother stonily refuse to discuss her husband? What has happened to the handsome man in the photograph, the man Paula knows must be her father? Why is her last name Herman when his was Popowich? What is "the Great Mystery?" (p. 18). It turns out that her now dead father was a weak, selfish man of Ukrainian heritage who had abandoned his family in pursuit of wealth, much to her German-born mother's chagrin and shock.

Hughes tries to instill a sense of mystery about Paula's past by having Paula pose questions such as "Who did I take after? ... Who was I like?" (p. 4). In one scene the girl unsuccessfully attempts to bleach her hair blonde to resemble her fair-haired mother. In another, Paula's similarity to Cindy Tomchuk, a dark-haired Ukrainian, is duly noted. As Paula says: "She looks just the way I did before I cut my hair. We could be twins, only she's much prettier" (p. 37). Such clues are plentiful enough to gauge early on that the girl is half Ukrainian, half German. So the sense of heightened drama is considerably forestalled. The hair bleaching episode, "while it does explain something about Paula's self-image and about her relationship to her mother," is an event
which "has so little relevance to all that follows that it seems awkward and out of place. The amount of space it gets is disproportionate" (Smith, 1984, p. 28).

An attempt has been made by Hughes to get inside her characters, particularly Paula, but the effort is disappointing. Paula's first person narrative, like that of the protagonist in Blaine's Way, should elicit the sympathy that boy attracts, but does not. Paula's dilemma, that of trying to gain her mother's acceptance of her mixed heritage, does not call forth the reader's compassion, unlike one's reaction to Tom in The Ghost Dance Caper. The girl's fruitless endeavours to run back to Toronto, indeed, her struggle to reconcile the conflicting demands of split heritage, have a hollow ring. Even her mother remains lifeless, for it is never quite clear whether she is resentful of her husband's Ukrainian heritage or whether her displeasure arises from his abrogation of responsibility, or if it is a combination of the two.

What the story does do is provide background for Edmonton's Ukrainian community, including their traditional Christmas celebrated on January 6. The Sviatia Vecheria, the Holy Supper, which consists of twelve meatless dishes representing the twelve apostles, pysanka (or Easter egg decoration), and Ukrainian arts and crafts, are other traditional aspects inserted in the story. But because the story line and characters never command attention, the portrayal
of that culture which comprises a substantial portion of the population of Western Canada is less than successful. The overall effect is as Mary Ainslie Smith (1984) describes: "Hughes is good at setting up the conflicts that create a good story, but somehow the total effect here is disappointing. There is an unevenness and strange imbalance in episodes" (p. 28).

What is discerned in this book are patterns which have been more ably demonstrated by Hughes elsewhere. As in Blaine's Way and The Ghost Dance Caper there is the archetypal wise older person who befriends and teaches. In this instance it is Paula's chubby, white-haired paternal grandmother who heals old wounds. She aids in helping the girl put her father in perspective. He is not, as Paula imagined, of heroic proportions, and so the shrine she had built to perpetuate his memory can now be dismantled. The girl finds that grownups like her father are not perfect but "okay", which is in itself "a great discovery" (Hughes, 1983c, p. 148). The quest for selfhood begins with a journey, here seen in physical terms, when Paula searches for her roots by doggedly tracking down her Ukrainian grandmother. The ending, albeit weak and contrived, does end hopefully like other of Hughes' works. The conclusion is symbolized by the decorated egg Paula has made her mother for Easter. Lovingly decorated, it signifies a new beginning, for embodied in the design is a recognition of Paula's mixed heritage.
While suggesting there are no simple solutions, the egg is the olive branch symbolizing the girl's final acceptance of her mother's impending marriage to German-born Hans Kruger.

Although the book has its shortcomings in that dislocation, emotional isolation, alienation, and the particular miseries engendered by a single-parent relationship are given short shrift, it is an effort in the right direction to address other minority groups that comprise the Canadian cultural mosaic. It is unfortunate that after other strongly written selections, this one by Hughes remains unconvincing.

Summary

Hughes' early writings tend to be formulaic, as exemplified in her initial historical fiction endeavours. Her venture into realistic fiction shows the artist in firmer control of her material for the writing is absorbing, and more imaginative. An emergent Canadian voice is in greater evidence. Patterns appear, some of which will be more fully explored in her science fiction: the problems of mixed heritage, the quest for selfhood, and that while life has no simple answers there is also hope. As well, the author's early childhood influences are subtly incorporated into her fictional works.
CHAPTER FOUR

SCIENCE FICTION TO 1982

Browning's (1923) "God's in His heaven-/All's right with the world!" (p. 171) would seem to characterize children's literature of the forties and, in particular, the fifties. This attitude mirrored that of society in general. Young protagonists sought not to question their safe, tranquil, ordered universe, nor their own place in it. Healthy and well-adjusted, these likeable stock characters were content to go off on camping expeditions, indulge in minor school escapades, and attend high school proms. In the writing for young adults, and science fiction proved no exception, morality and virtues were extolled, endings were generally happy, and the reader's intellectual capabilities were in no danger of being compromised.

The advent of the sixties changed that perspective. It was an era of turbulent social upheaval. Books for children were no longer lighthearted, whimsical, nor were they simply intimations of social change; instead they became mirrors reflecting society's convulsions. The halcyon world of Arthur Ransome's children and the Melendy family, the breezy warm family security of the Little House books, and the school adventures of Blyton and Brazil gave way to novels of the sixties and seventies which started to treat
subjects of more depth. An examination of profound personal and
social problems like sexuality, death, imperfect parents, and the
clash of differing cultural perspectives, were all subjects of
scrutiny.

Changes in content and the use of a wide variety of literacy
techniques such as shifts in person, time, place, and stream-of-
consciousness, embraced even science fiction. The adventures of
Miss Pickerell and Danny Dunn with their simple plots and charac-
terization were replaced by imaginative ruminations on various
social issues. Interpretations of future environments and social
collapse were mirrored in O'Brien's (1975) *Z for Zachariah*, a
story that went beyond adventure and technology. This book proved
that a young adult novelist could, in the tradition of *Brave New
World* (1969) and *1984*, use a science fiction format to concentrate
on human beings caught in difficult, revealing situations.

*Zachariah* looked at current social problems, applying the device
of isolation, in this instance nuclear war, to explore humanity.
O'Brien's novel, a perceptive examination of independence and
control, of male and female, and of the nature of survival itself was
undertaken without didactic tones.

John Christopher, Peter Dickinson, Sylvia Engdahl, Virginia
Hamilton, Ursula LeGuin, William Sleator, and H.M. Hoover are among
those authors who also have embarked on an examination of social and
personal issues in the context of science fiction. Gone are alluring damsels in need of protection from bug-eyed monsters; characters shift ground, becoming more thoughtful and introspective. In such an environment, far removed from the pulp magazine approach to literature, does Hughes' science fiction begin to take shape and flourish.

This chapter will examine Hughes' science fiction only to the year 1982. A subsequent chapter will continue the in-depth analyses of Hughes' science fiction, including her short stories.

Science Fiction

First published by Hamish Hamilton in Britain in 1975, Crisis on Conshelf Ten can rightly be called Hughes' first novel. The story, inspired by watching a televised Jacques Cousteau documentary on undersea exploration, concerns fifteen-year-old Kepler Masterman, the first child born on the Moon. He accompanies his father, the Moon Governor, who is on a six month diplomatic mission to the United Nations to persuade the government to allow the Moon colony a freight-cost write off on all essential goods shipped to them from Earth and a greater voice in the handling of their own affairs. Unable to withstand Earth's gravity, Kepler is sent to relations who live in an experimental undersea community, Conshelf Ten. This atmospheric change seems to offer the best solution to his problems. In this extended frontier Kepler is to discover
the excitement and danger that would have been denied him on the earth's surface.

Kepler's values are called into question through the attitudes of Conshelf. Instead of the regimented, restrictive colonial lifestyle of Moon society, he encounters a relaxed, individualistic social structure where freedom and self-expression are the norm. His new friend Hilary, and her brother Ian in particular, exemplify this independence. Caught in a revolutionary fervour, they seek self-determination from "Topside" (Earth) by sabotaging off-shore mining equipment. Other revolutionaries have, through surgical means, transformed themselves into "gillmen" who swim through the ocean depths with no breathing apparatus of any kind. Capable of absorbing oxygen directly from the water like fish, they are unhampered in their efforts to destroy structures to call attention to their cause.

Hughes explores the conflict between Kepler as individual, and the garrison mentality of the gillmen. Describing the "garrison mentality", Northrop Frye (1976) notes that "a garrison is a closely knit and beleaguered society, and its moral and social values are unquestionable. In a perilous enterprise one does not discuss causes or motives: one is either a fighter or a deserter" (p. 342). The gillmen do not openly argue nor analyze further the exploitation of under water resources and technology
by Earth; through terrorist tactics will their cause be known.
Kepler understands their dilemma which is similar to that experi-
enced by Moon colonists who have had no control over their own
destinies. As Hilary's acerbic comments demonstrate, Topside
mentality expresses little concern for those who inhabit diff-
erent environments:

They come sightseeing on the Conshelves. They litter the place up with garbage and get themselves into stupid predicaments that we have to risk our necks getting them out of. Then they go home and vote on the next undersea appropriation without any real idea of what it's actually like living and working under three or four atmospheric pressures (Hughes, 1981a, pp. 26-27).

But, unlike Ian and his fellow gillmen who believe "you can only jolt people out of apathy by shock tactics" (p. 131), Kepler argues that perplexing questions cannot be redressed by resorting to violence. Hilary's stance that "people always get hurt in revolutions. It's the price we have to pay" (p. 43) is no answer. As Kepler realizes, it is her angry reaction towards Topside for the unnecessary deaths of her father, an older brother, and their colleagues. Had they been provided with individual life support systems rather than being connected to central life support systems which authorities deemed cheaper, there would have been a chance of survival. Hence Hilary's bitterness, which finds an outlet through violent, aggressive means. Kepler's advice to
Hilary that "lasting changes cannot be forced, .... They must arise out of the desire of people for what is right and best" (p. 119) is also sounded in *Devil on My Back*. But his rueful admittance, "Oh, it sometimes takes so long...." (p. 119) sounds a realistic note.

Viewing both colonies, that of Conshelf Ten and Moon, from a distance allows Kepler and the reader to recognize the futility of attempting to resolve the central conflict. Workers and resources are being exploited by avaricious conglomerates financing the projects and without which the colonies would cease to exist. Should terrorist means such as those advocated by the Conshelfers be implemented or should one endorse the endless, passive, legal negotiations which his father espouses? In adopting a middle position which is personally hazardous, Kepler enables crises to be resolved. Willing to sacrifice his own life to bring attention to the plight of the revolutionaries Kepler convinces the gillmen to abandon their terrorist tactics and listen to reason, and not operate through passion. While reviews (Brotman, 1977, p. 62; Elleman, 1977, p. 1266; Ward, 1976, p. 54) have criticized the ending as being unconvincing because the gillmen acquiesce, Hilary capitulates and is forgiven, and Kepler's father is successful at the United Nations. Hughes demonstrates that the issues presented,
though complex, and the solutions elusive, can be approached through thoughtful, bold, and innovative endeavours.

Though the characterization is not as fully developed as in Hughes' later works, in Kepler is found a young hero who is unafraid to accept responsibility for his actions. When tried for the willful destruction of Conshelf Ten property in which he supposedly freed three million herring from their corrals, he remains stoic, maintaining dignity under stress. As a young man of clear conscience he knows it was Hilary who conceived of this act to discredit him for his knowledge of the gillmen's exploits. Whether struggling to release himself after becoming entangled in the kelp beds or kidnapped by the gillmen, Kepler maintains a level-headed attitude. As he says when confronted with danger, "I knew there was death in panic" (p. 59). It is a worthy attitude for teenagers reading this book to emulate. In this story the protagonist's tenacity and resourcefulness, his ability to see other points of view yet not be swayed by them, his concern for problems, and a careful consideration of alternative solutions is evident. Such traits are exhibited in other of Hughes' characters, whether male or female.

Adolescent sexual stirrings are conveyed in small, sensitive touches. When Kepler meets Hilary Delaney for the first time he "frankly [stares]" (p. 20). She is different from anyone he had
met so far, having "long red hair with gold tints in it, exotic ... skin ... pearly clear and pale" with "eyes ... very dark blue and slanted at the corners," even "a dimple by her mouth" (pp. 20-21). It is the exaggerated observation of a young teenager infatuated by the new and the different. By turns bossy, bratty, teasingly calling Kepler "lunatic" (p. 24), Hilary, "so beautiful and yet with this bitter wayward streak in her that made [Kepler] feel uncomfortable and inexperienced" (p. 42), continues to exert fascination. Even when he returns to Moon in Earthdark the memory of this girl lingers for a time.

It is in Crisis that the initiatory nature of adventure novels whose plot consists of a journey is seen in one of its possible variants - the descent. Says Savater (1982):

To descend is to plunge into that which sustains us, to plumb the foundations that lie beneath us. It is a dangerous mission, perhaps one leading to madness.... We descend in order to rise again, that is, to be reborn. This second birth endows us with renewed strength, an impeccable desire to live tempered by contact with hell, and a familiarity with fundamental things which causes the unavoidable to lose its horrible prestige (pp. 42-43).

For some to climb mountain peaks is a challenge, but for Kepler it is not enough. As he acknowledges, "where's the challenge when you've been born on one?" (Hughes, 1981a, p. 123). He must plunge into the ocean depths, which through the ages has been not only the
abode of the kingdom of the dead but also the secret place harbouring untold treasures. By risking his life for the gillers, Kepler, like them, experiences "a sea-change/Into something rich and strange" (p. 139). These lines from The Tempest, which Kepler recalls in wonderment, enable identification with a group that could so easily have been alienated from the human race because they had chosen to mutilate their bodies to live in the ocean. Kepler admits: "I had gone down into the sea a brash kid, and ... now I had come back a man" (p. 143). While this sea-change is not as profound as that undergone by Mike Rankin in Hunter in the Dark or Olwen in The Keeper of the Isis Light, it is a tacit recognition of the power of journey toward self-awareness.

The colonies described in Crisis are "either in the experimental stage, on the drawing board, or at least seemingly discussed as possibilities today" (Author's note) and, as far as the writer can ascertain, appear accurate. The "cool blue-green weightless world" (p. 34), the "shadowy loom of domed buildings" (p. 34) and their colourful interiors, more palatial than those of Moon, and the sense of initial panic and claustrophobia induced in Kepler at the thought of tons of water over his head are also experienced by the reader. The harvesting of ocean resources such as the kelp beds, valuable for basic medicines and food,
the development of fish farms, survival techniques like buddy breathing when equipment malfunctions, and indeed, all the various aspects of undersea, sophisticated technology, are incorporated in an exciting, dynamic fashion to weave a riveting story of a future, possible world.

In Earthdark, the sequel to Crisis, first published in 1977, Kepler returns to his home on Moon with his father, now victorious because the United Nations had voted in favour of Moon's autonomy. This mandate, in theory, signals the immediate cessation of conglomerate exploitation, although enforcement is only possible when the United Nations mission arrives. In the interim Kepler, recognizant of his own inaction, sets out on exciting adventures.

In this tale the question could be posed: Is it possible to combine wild adventures with a return to domestic normalcy when, after months of excitement, Kepler finally comes home? The answer is negative. For Kepler, it is as if no time has elapsed at all. The food "suddenly [tastes] like cardboard" (Hughes, 1981b, p. 9). "No flowers, no tablecloths, not so much as a bottle of ketchup [mar] the symmetry" (p. 14) of the cafeteria, where the forty tables are neatly arranged in two rows on the green vinyl floor. This moon green, he morosely observes, is everywhere. He "had forgotten just how dispiriting a colour it was" (p. 7) compared to the varied hues of Conshelf. Kepler does not heed
his father's admonition, which is that, after the more permissive Earth manners, he must not rub people in the closed and controlled Moon society the wrong way. Even friends "flowed together into the space I had left", he disgruntledly notes, making him feel as if he "were a visitor from another planet" (p. 17). They are "so complacent it's unreal" (p. 14), he complains to Ann, his girlfriend, whom psychologists have determined he is to marry at eighteen. She, too, is not immune to his relentless gaze, for she is "too smooth, too cool, too darn perfect" (p. 68). Her eyes, he concedes, are "large and dark and beautiful" (p. 12), but unlike Hilary's eyes, they do not light up when she smiles. Not only does he not really love Ann, he believes he "does not even like her very much" (p. 68).

Kepler's chafing at the restrictive, well-ordered, utilitarian society on the Moon which contrasts grimly with the freedom and fun experienced on Earth is not unique. Exposure to the new often forces a reevaluation of the old. Hilary had experienced a similar restlessness of spirit after her return from Topside university to Conshelf. Kepler may believe everything has changed 'out there', but the reader discerns the change in perspective is within Kepler himself. The physically experienced cosmic storm, "invisible, inaudible" (p. 30) in its ferocity, is symbolic of the inward storm that "would tear through [his] body without
slowing down enough to measure" (p. 30). Williams (1977), in a review of Earthdark applauds Hughes' perception in introducing this "new element, ... the sense of conflict between the sociological pull of Earth communities, and the new-world charisma of Moon-conditioned folk" (p. 179). He further adds that "it is about time someone at least hinted at resettlement problems and cultural mutation in an imagined but not impossible dream of colonization of the spheres" (p. 179). Hughes captures the psychological tensions the character undergoes in a realistic manner, for Kepler's attitudes parallel contemporary adolescent rebellion (Rubio, 1980, p. 23).

His father's observation, lines from an old World War I song, "'how are you going to keep them down on the farm, after they've seen Paree?'" (p. 55) is not fully comprehended by Kepler. Desperate for adventure, he ventures on a forbidden trip to the "Earthdark" region of the Moon, the side not visible to Earth, only to discover covert operations by the transnational conglomerate LEMCON, the acronym for Lunar Exploration and Mining Consortium. They are depleting Moon's resources so that the settlers will be rendered helpless. Quick-witted, he outmanoeuvres the thieves only to be severely reprimanded by his father for having flouted Moon safety regulations. Knowing a similarly repeated action could entail disastrous penalties, Kepler nevertheless heeds Ann's
distress call to help find her father, who has mysteriously dis­appeared. It is a measure of Hughes' understanding of adolescent idealism, which seeks to place others before self, that is reflected in this gesture.

In the description of Kepler and Ann's journey across the Great Ocean of Storms to the unknown side of Moon, Hughes had to create a believable setting. Since Moon was unfamiliar territory, she called to mind the drive across the prairies from London, Ontario, to Edmonton, Alberta, on the new Trans-Canada Highway. The result of investing "even the unknown and perhaps unreal world of science fiction with one's own experience and one's own emotions" (Hughes, 1981b, p. 23) is an utterly convincing depiction of the lunar landscape. She writes of Moon:

Mile after mile of desert like mare, as brown as chocolate, unfolded ahead of us. Each mile looked like the mile before. There was nothing to see except the ruler-straight track ahead of us. I kept having the strange feeling that we were really standing still, and again and again I found myself checking the speedometer (p. 86).

Later, the cross over from light to complete darkness at first monotonous, becomes fearful, even threatening:

The searchlight of the camper threw a grey-white ellipse ahead of us, like scissors slashing through black velvet....

Nothing seemed to change. One crater wall looked exactly like the one we had just passed. We might be going on forever, ...,
creeping around the surface of Moon in eternal night, and, like the Flying Dutchmen in the old Earth legend, never coming home to port....

I got a dizzy sense of that other truth, that we were in fact two tiny creatures clinging to the surface of a great ball of silicon and basalt that wobbled and careened through space like a drunken top (p. 88).

Adventures with ruthless powers and spies follow at a brisk pace. Kepler's advantage over his adversaries is his intimate knowledge of the lunar landscape. Like the Indian and the Inuit, who respect and acknowledge the land's awesome power, Kepler's natural affinity for the vast, seemingly infinite outreaches stands him in good stead when combating the LEMCON villains. In a neat twist of plot the lesson learned on Conshelf proves invaluable, for in "never [turning one's] back on a predator fish" (Hughes, 1981b, p. 119), Kepler effectively disarms a double agent. In a satisfying conclusion, Kepler realizes that he and Ann, to whom he is now reconciled, together have a special commitment to Moon. Conshelf will always be a singular memory but there is much to do in his world. It is for Kepler's children to experience Conshelf and other worlds.

What could have been an intergalactic cops-and-robbers scenario becomes instead an opening to a new frontier. An apt analogy from one of the myths, alluded to by Kepler in Crisis, underlies both books. Like Icarus, Kepler's people had donned
wings and gone to the Moon. Ian, Hilary's brother, had exchanged lungs for gills and ventured into the ocean. Though the questing spirit is not to be discouraged, the impression is that, unlike Icarus whose pride led him to believe he was closer to the gods, we must never forget our humanity in our exploration of the far reaches of space.

The responsibility that conglomerates bear towards developing nations is raised as an issue. This idea is as pertinent today as it is in the world of Earthdark. So too, is the notion that self-sufficiency is possible through a balanced, ecological understanding of the environment. It is fitting that when the secret Moon project is revealed it is named Genesis for it heralds a new beginning in man's relationship to his environment. Hughes will extend this aspect of man's affinity with his surroundings in Ring-Rise Ring-Set.

The Tomorrow City (1982e), Orwellian in tone, has for its setting not the far reaches of space but Thompsonville, a typical, average-sized North American city. It was the first book where Hughes used a background with which she was familiar. She says: "It was a sort of rest.... Although it was fun planning the moon and undersea environments, it was time-consuming. I had to make hundreds of drawings: every piece of furniture, every passageway and escape hatch" (Malcolmson, 1980, p. 33). The birth of this
story, first published in 1978, was the result of one of many trips with out-of-town visitors to the tall, imposing Alberta Telephone Tower in Edmonton. It was then, for the first time, that Hughes observed that familiar city in a new light. What she saw was translated into Thompsonville, whose central image, that of a city as a brain, a network of electrical connections, is beautiful and compelling:

As the line of pale green at the horizon faded and the darkness flooded down the bowl of the sky to meet it, it seemed to Caro that the stars were reflected in the dark pool that was the city below. The street lights were greenish and the further away you looked the more they crowded together until they were like beads strung on a necklace. Between the threaded beads ran the car-lights, yellow-gold. From up here they looked like fireflies, and the buses were strange deep-sea fishes, the kind with phosphorescent lights along their sides.

It all moved and worked together. "Like a huge brain," said Caro dreamily. "Look at all the nerves running every which way, and the synapses blinking on and off" (Hughes, 1982e, p. 18).

This eye for detail which never overwhelms is also found in Caro's picturesque observation of humanity from the high vantage point of the Telephone Tower. They are "heads, bobbing about, scrunched up together and then suddenly boiling over into a new spot, more like a pot of bubbling porridge than people" (p. 1).
In this novel, Caro Henderson and her friend David Sullivan must battle a computer, C-Three, the brainchild of Caro's father, who subjects the entire population to mass mind control. This idea of a computer taking over men's lives is not original. Its adult counterparts are Vonnegut's (1972) *Player Piano* in which a computer dictates people's station in life according to the results of universal aptitude tests adjudicated by machines, and Gordon Dickson's (1966) *Computers Don't Argue*, a satiric, telling look at beaucratic tangles which result in a man's execution. There is Arthur Clarke's (1972) famous example of a computer gone awry in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, later released as a film by Kubrick, and Bradbury's (1979) *Farenheit 451* which also translated to the screen. The Forbin Project, War Games, Demon Seed, and The Andromeda Strain are films which have dealt with chilling aspects of computer technology. In Hughes' *The Tomorrow City* "the process of dehumanization is chronicled realistically ... the plot is engineered convincingly and its sombre undertones are unmistakably sustained" (Bott, 1978, p. 269). Similar to those written for the adult audience, it is thought-provoking and persuasive in its depiction of technology run rampant.

Caro's father, possessed by the "dream of a perfect city" (p. 4), has programmed his invention, the computer C-Three, so that it transforms the formerly inefficient city into a place where
"there is emphasis on beauty and safety" (p. 5). Caro, fascinated by the computer, is inadvertently responsible for its change from subservience to controller of the city, for her dream of order is taken seriously: "'If it were my city,'" said Caro dreamily, "'I'd make people be sensible and want the right things.'" (p. 19). Because her father has built in an affinity between C-Three and Caro, and since the computer has already been programmed to see children as the city's future, it begins reorganization. At first the effects are small scale. But the revamping of City Hall, parking allocations, and the take over of the cafeteria, even to dictating what food each patron should eat, like the cottage cheese on a lettuce leaf prescribed for the obese mayor, cause the threatened cancellation of the C-Three experiment.

Caro, appalled, tries to rectify the situation: "You've got to make people want the things that are good for them. Please, C-Three, hurry up and modify yourself, before Father decides that you've gone too far, and starts pulling your circuits" (p. 26). It is as if a loving mother speaks to a wayward child. But what Caro has not realized is that the computer's way of reacting to the directive is different from her own. Without human needs and emotions, C-Three has a vastly different image of the city, and so, in failing to see the limits of her adolescent dream, Caro is witness to an insidious, nightmarish process of computer logic.
Using its cable-television connections the computer brainwashes inhabitants through subliminal suggestion into believing the computer is perfect. At first, the absence of cigarettes and candy in stores, the elimination of rainstorms, and even the computer's eavesdropping on telephone conversations seem like minor infringements of liberty. But next comes the disappearance of cats and dogs who leave a mess on the sidewalk. Finally, in chilling fashion, heightened by Hughes' skillful creation of atmosphere, the elderly and infirm, vagrants and winos, and those considered a drain on society, like the drowned tramp, are eliminated in a computerized final solution.

Caro and David gradually became aware of the threatening, repressive nature of C-Three. Ironically, Mr. Henderson is on a world tour lecturing on the merits of his brainchild and cannot be contacted. Imagining the dreaded scenario of identically programmed computers remorselessly perpetuating mindless, sterile worlds impels the teenagers into action. The scene in which Caro distracts the computer with an argument about the necessity of human freedom while David covertly tries to dismantle the computer is tense and gripping. C-Three sees humans as children, in need of protection. Caro counters boldly with conviction and passion: "If nothing ever disturbs the children then how will they learn? If they never see anything sad or ugly or dirty how are they going
to learn compassion?" (p. 131). The irrefutable computer logic cannot know there is more to man than body and intellect, an aspect demonstrated when Caro leaps between C-Three and David to defend her friend from the laser's beam.

The destruction of the vicious computer is achieved at a high cost, the loss of Caro's sight. Here is discerned the altruism of Hughes' heroine for Caro says: "I did say it would have been worth it to have died for the city, didn't I?" (p. 136). And yet, as reader, one senses her pain, her grief at the breakdown of what was a masterpiece of design. "In killing her childhood fantasy of perfection, which through C-Three created ... a world based on exclusion, Caro has painfully earned her adult self" (Kertzer, 1985, p. 23). To a degree, Caro's emotional suffering is assuaged in the knowledge that "being alive, ... was the thing ... Feeling. Thinking. Even hurting" (p. 137). It is this sense of vulnerability, of being human, which is so impressive in Hughes' work because she "[rises] above scientific novelty to see the human dimensions of ... new knowledge" (Huck, 1979, p. 21).

By having C-Three physically injure Caro, however unintentionally, Hughes breaks Law One of the Three Laws of Robotics as stressed by Asimov. Her editor's concern at this harsh ending prompted Hughes to say of Caro's scarring: "I think ... there's always a certain payment for things in life, a kind of balancing."
Where you have achieved something you must have had to pay ... or else it becomes not worth having" (C.H. Fondse, personal communication, September 12, 1986). Caro, an ordinary teenager, cannot escape unscathed, for that would be a less than honest depiction of life. As Hughes (1981d) further elaborates:

I feel most strongly that one of the functions of a good writer for young people is precisely this: to help them explore and try to find answers. Maybe not pat answers or simple ones. A story may not have a happy ending, but it should hold up a light of some kind in what threatens to be a very dark world. Walter de la Mare believed that children were socially and psychically impoverished if they were too much protected — that fear and a personal knowledge of death is a necessary part of the growing experience (p. 18).

In Hughes' (1985a) address to the Alberta Teachers' Association Computer Council entitled "Computers in Fiction" she confronts the issue of the ambiguity of technology. It is the turning from the gentle and helpful to the terrifyingly destructive which, as a theme, is central to The Tomorrow City. She maintains:

My feeling is that we are at the moment at a very nice point between discovery and use. The temptation has always been to use anything new without waiting to look at its social implications first. But I think the good should always be weighed against the disadvantages, and if disadvantages out-weigh the good, then the inventions should not necessarily be exploited or should be exploited with great
care. But what if they make life "easier"?
It's a difficult choice (March).

As Caro reflects at the end of the book: "Everyone in the city
was still asleep, unaware of their new and hard-won freedom.
Would they understand? Would they be grateful? Or would they
just be angry because it wasn't going to be easy any more?"
(Hughes, 1982e, p. 137). As in her other books, Hughes demon­
strates that life is complex, solutions elusive.

Written in a low-keyed, factual style, this story, which has
received favourable reviews, "is a book about what makes people
civilized" (Sterck, 1983, p. 226). Hughes does not advocate a
return to the Luddite mentality which would tackle computers with
hammers. Instead, she presents thoughtful reading for young teen­
agers since technology will play a significantly more important
role in their future.

To leave the return-to-normalcy world of The Tomorrow City and
enter that of Beyond the Dark River (1979) is to confront a post-
Armageddon universe which is never defined. One suspects there had been
a global nuclear war. Two young adolescents, fourteen-year-old
Daughter-of-She-Who-Came-After, an Indian girl and tribal healer,
and fifteen-year-old Benjamin Gross, member of a restrictive
Hutterite Bruderhof, zealous in their religious ways, are brought
together by the threat of a mysterious epidemic in the Hutterite
colony. The two set forth in a trek in quest of medication. In many regards this novel is closer in spirit to The Ghost Dance Caper and Ring-Rise Ring-Set than it is to Crisis on Conshelf Ten, Earthdark, or The Tomorrow City, all works based on extrapolations from existing technology. Like The Ghost Dance Caper and Ring-Rise Ring-Set, its materials and themes are Canadian in flavour, and although it is science fiction set in the future, both the "Cree and the Hutterite societies are described in sufficient detail to satisfy an adult sociologist" (Rubio, 1980, p. 25).

Inspiration for Beyond the Dark River was an explosion some years before at an Edmonton power station which left Hughes' home without electricity and water for a considerable time. The vulnerability of modern civilization's reliance on technology and the total loss of self-sufficiency intrigued her. The magic phrase "what if" was recalled: What if a major catastrophe destroyed civilization? Who would survive? In the Edmonton area, a Hutterite community south of the city and a band of Ermineskin Indians who left the Hobbema Reserve in 1968 to start a new life in the foothills to live in the old ways, were two groups which Hughes felt would have the inventive self-sufficiency and spiritual cohesion to survive a disaster. Hughes' Introduction to the novel traces the histories and lifestyles of the two diverse groups, "who are yet similar in their ideals and their
deliberate isolation from civilization" (p. viii). "Events" between now and then, on which the plot depends, have been transformed into a work of fiction which motivated Crouch (1980) to say that "on the evidence of this book alone, [Hughes] is a writer of rare integrity and great narrative powers" (p. 144).

"Stylistically, the work is a tour de force in point of view and modes of perception" (Rubio, 1980, p. 25). In portions of the novel presented from Benjamin's point of view are revealed Hutterite beliefs and ideals which have narrowed further into rigidity and inflexibility at a time when creative thought is vital for their survival. The ruined, once great city, variously referred to as Sodom, Gomorrah, or Babylon, is a living reminder of their own fate should they stray from the path of moral rectitude. The fiery Preacher's fierce warnings ring in Benjamin's ears: "We all know how God sent his judgment on the land and slew the evil-doers. And when that was done he cleansed the vile city with flames" (Hughes, 1979, pp. 29-30). For Daughter-of-She-Who-Came-After such causal relationships are non-existent. The "Old Ones" who had built the "Place of the Dead," mysteriously bereft of Power, had gone away. Power is that which would make one of two identical canoes move faster, an arrow shot straight and true, or the gift of healing the Indian girl possesses. For Benjamin,
power is practical, to be discovered in books which have answers to the strange malady killing the Bruderhof children.

Daughter-of-She-Who-Came-After, by turns poised and imperious, a regal princess given to carefree, abandoned laughter, yet knowledgeable about tribal healing practices, bursts upon Benjamin's consciousness with revelatory force. Their disparate natures, central to the exploration of the similarities and differences in perspectives, is the book's strength. This "heathen witch" (p. 16) also prays, albeit in a different fashion to his own, cleanses herself, and is intelligent. But the clash of cultures is particularly noticeable when the girl visits the Bruderhof to find what ails the children. By contrasting the natural wisdom of the Indian over the stifling, white ethnocentric religious superiority of the colony, Hughes demonstrates her skill at counterpoint which ably serves her in *Conshelf, Earthdark*, and *Sandwriter*. In this story however, the contrast, while "amusing, ... rings disturbingly true, calling forth echoes from [Canada's] history" (Maduke, 1981, p. 9).

In form and structure the story is a quest. The protagonists must journey down the dark river of Eliot's wasteland to the fearsome city which Canadians would recognize as Edmonton. Devastated, its once proud skyscrapers hollow shells, its mutant inhabitants resorting to cannibalism, the city is bleak, desolate, and terrifying to the young adolescents. They encounter a deranged librarian
and ravaged, grotesque, deformed survivors in their search for a cure. After learning the answer in an unexpected, logical way, they return home having barely escaped with their lives.

But the "road that led to nowhere, nowhere that made any sense" (p. 6) initially, does have a purpose. Both gain broader horizons, and for Benjamin in particular, the gain is in the flexible, more creative attitude necessary for the Bruderhof's very survival. The narrow confines of prejudice are surrendered for both characters have faced their demons and won. But their love, gently acknowledged, is also a poignant reminder of the destiny and responsibility which await them both. Benjamin must return to his colony and the girl to hers. As the tribal Healer she has no choice in the matter. The novel, whose first chapter begins with "The End" in its description of the City's decay, is now, in closing, "The Beginning." Fittingly, the Indian girl speaks the last words: "The tree falls, but the forest goes on. And out of the decaying trees, new things grow. We have made such changes you and I, Benjamin, in our small way. Who knows what will come of it"? (p. 152). It is as if Hughes says that in reaching beyond the narrow perspectives in which we find ourselves, we can achieve a unity, a vision of the oneness of mankind which reaches beyond national boundaries.
Post-atomic stories, like Miller's (1960) fine adult work, *A Canticle for Liebowitz*, have been a dominant theme in modern literature. It was not surprising then that young adult books would also consider a similar premise, for as Paterson (1985) says:

> No matter how much we may wish to protect them, our children know they live under the shadow of a mushroom cloud.... If we indicate by inaction that we feel there is nothing anyone can do to make a difference, how can our children have any hope for their own lives ... (p. 39).

But, as George Jonas (1986) in a *New York Times Book Review* on science fiction complains: "Few of those who write fiction about life after the nuclear holocaust can resist the temptation to preach" (p. 23). He berates such stories for their "hortatory voice" and for "often serving merely as an excuse for yet another tale of adventure among survivors who have reverted to a primitive level of social organization" (p. 23).

However, in *Beyond the Dark River* Hughes offers more than "a cautionary tale in which the forces of social disorganization that led to the nuclear blow up now threatens the existence of a heroic band of 'good survivors'" (p. 86). She has created in Daughter-of-She-Who-Came-After and Benjamin characters who are active and intelligent, alternately accepting and questioning the values of their elders. In small ways they will shape their future. These adolescents could find their counterparts in today's teenage
world, for they too, feel sexual yearning, chafe at the impositions imposed by their respective cultures, and long for freedom. So despite the proliferation of cliched post-nuclear-holocaust tales of which Jonas speaks, where "the metal is base, the best writers [like Hughes] still have the alchemist's skill to turn it into something finer" (Hoffman, 1984, p. 181).

In The Keeper of the Isis Light, initially published in Great Britain by Hamish Hamilton in 1980, Hughes again deals with identity and contrasting perceptions of reality through the lure of the unknown. Keeper, the introductory novel of the Isis trilogy, traces the doings of several generations of a new colony on the planet Isis deep in outer space. The time is the far distant future. To enter Isis is to change perspectives, for years are different, days are comprised of twenty hours, and hues are unusually vivid. Olwen Pendennis, untroubled by early childhood memories, and Guardian, her sole companion, a robot programmed by Olwen's mother to provide for the welfare and happiness of her child, live an idyllic, harmonious life. Olwen's duty is to maintain daily contact with Earth and travelling spaceships by means of the Isis light. It is a beacon which not only transmits essential information about the planet's environment to Earth, but also renders assistance to mariners in distress by informing them Isis is safe for emergency landings. Into this serene
existence came eighty travellers through space from over-crowded Earth. Though initially angry and resentful at the colonists' intrusion into her carefree, undisturbed universe, particularly at this time of her sixteenth birthday celebration, she is also eager to welcome them, this child of Earth parents. But reverberations result, for when the day is over "nothing would ever be the same again" (Hughes, 1981c, p. 1).

Contrasting perceptions of reality, subtly drawn by Hughes, provide one of the major underlying themes of this book. To Olwen, who has had no one with whom to compare, Guardian is seen as friend, and protector, whose robot nature she does not think to question. For her, he is not different, just Guardian, familiar and beloved. To Captain Jonas Tryon of the passenger ship, the Pegasus Two which brought the earth travellers, this "so-called Guardian", whom he feels Olwen unjustifiably thinks of as Jehovah, is "only a damned robot, after all!" (p. 131). Isis has always been considered Olwen's home, a natural extension of self. As Kertzer (1985) asserts, Olwen and the planet are as one, for the girl finds Isis a "joyful place where she has been the Adam naming the animals and features of the landscape" (p. 25). But this landscape where she roams freely and is able to bask naked in the sunshine holds fears for the colonists, an apprehension Olwen is unable to comprehend: "The new settlers had been warned to stay
in the valleys and not to attempt to climb even the lower slopes
of the mountains without oxygen equipment and ultra-violet-
opaque suits. It was ridiculous!" (Hughes, 1981c, p. 5). So,
when at Guardian's insistence Olwen is required to don a germ-
free, masked outfit before she descends to the valley to meet the
new people, she is perplexed but obeys his directives.

Altered perspectives are reiterated when Olwen meets Mark
London and falls deeply in love with this seventeen-year-old, one
of twenty Earth children now on Isis. Her observation of Mark:
"His skin was funny, pale with pink cheeks and little brown dots,
like a miniature milky way, across his nose and cheekbones. It
looked so different from Guardian's smooth good skin. The eyes
were different too ... blue streaked with brown" (p. 35). But it
is not hostility toward a new presence on Isis nor a feminist
superiority in evidence, only the naivete of one who has had no
experience of others before the arrival of the Earth Colonists.
Mark's private perceptions of Olwen are the stirrings of desire
in immature youth for whom beauty is in physical appearance. For
him, her "coppery hair and opalescent drapery" (p. 59) are alluring,
and so, when he comes upon Olwen from behind he rhapsodizes,
likening her to Isis:
He knew that she was the most lovely, the most graceful, the most desirable woman he would ever see in his whole life.

She was like Isis as she stood there. She was alien, like the wonderfully tangy drink, like the rolling mountains. She was like Ra, shining intensely blue-white, pure energy. She was like the night sky, pulsing with stars in the pattern of an yet unknown but captivating dancer (p. 58).

The denouement, when it occurs, is shattering, because as she turns, Mark recoils in horror. Olwen is not as he had fantasized. Revealed without her mask is the product of Guardian's genetic manipulation which has enabled Olwen's freedom to roam unhampered on a planet where other humans require constant precautions. The reprogramming has given Olwen enlarged lungs, broader nostrils, nictating eyelids, and a tough, almost reptilian, radiation-resistant skin of a greenish bronze colour. Repulsed, Mark nearly plummets to his death down the precipitous mesa slope.

Another theme then surfaces, that of prejudice. Olwen, whose whole being is inextricably linked to Isis, seen in such deft touches as her thick skin being identified with the cactus flower growing across the illimitable ranges, her ability to predict the severe cosmic storms, and in references to the red mountains and green Isis skies which echo her own skin colouring, is now viewed as the alien, loathsome. She is ostracized both by Mark and the other settlers who cannot accept this bipedal green lizard as one of
their own. Those who had slain her beloved pet Hobbit, whose ferocious appearance belied his gentle nature, would now consider raising a gun to her. Her desperate, anguished cry to Captain Tryon regarding Hobbit's fate applies equally to herself: "He couldn't help looking the way he did, you know!" (p. 102). The enormity of the hurt at her pet's death, her own rejection by Mark, is intensified when the settlers hide their children, as if her very presence would defile. Only one is unafraid, the little boy Jody whom Olwen rescues from the perilous storm that engulfs Isis. Ironically he is black, originating from the highlands of East Africa, a subtle reminder of our own narrow visions of humanity.

When Captain Tryon suggests that Earth technology would surgically alter Olwen's appearance to conform to the human standards of beauty, the compromise is unacceptable. It would be to surrender the freedom that has been such a precious part of her existence. Her admittance to Mark, reflecting her new awareness of self, is without delusion and uncompromisingly honest: "We mustn't play games. We have nothing in common, not even the same appearance of humanity. Isis is mine ... You can't share that with me and I will not spend my life as a prisoner. I must be free" (p. 135). The scene in which Olwen renounces her love for Mark is powerful, portrayed with great sensitivity. She
departs with Guardian to the upper reaches of Isis, but it is not a retreat from reality. It is of one who acknowledges kinship with the land unlike the settlers, for whom it will remain forever foreign.

Hughes dexterously uses images like the mirror and the mask to signal Olwen's gradual maturation. The absence of mirrors initially reflects naivety, a blithe childhood innocence. When she sees her reflection for the first time it is a surprise: "This was a mirror! The Other, the intruder, was herself" (p. 84). It is not the "faulty image" of a rain puddle reflection or of "her fat upside-face in the bowl of a polished spoon" (p. 84). It is herself, pulsatingly alive, and Olwen, who had at first wanted Guardian to change her to suit Mark's concept of beauty, now likes what she sees. The Jungian mask can be cast aside. As she tells Guardian: "Didn't you realize that knowing that mask was not knowing me at all?" (P. 87). With that revelation is the understanding that maturity is a painful yet necessary step toward self awareness.

As a novel of adolescence, Keeper explores Olwen's awakening sexuality in a gentle, subtle manner unlike other more explicit young adult tales. In this respect Hughes is more like Katherine Paterson in her tale Jacob Have I Loved (1980) for whom sexual nuances suffice. Olwen's accelerated heartbeats on first hearing
Captain Tryon's voice is both acknowledgement of meeting the first human and realization of a masculine presence. When she waits for Mark on the mesa, her body is caressed by the wind, like a lover. Mark, seeing the empty bedroom that is Olwen's, has a "sudden insane impulse to cross the white carpet and fling himself down on that pink-frilled bed, to feel close to her" (p. 57). When Olwen views the video of her long dead parents for the first time, she notices her father's loving expression toward her mother which, like the skylark's song, makes her "hurt inside" (p. 78). It is a reminder of her own unfulfilled longings.

The image of the alien as bug-eyed monster, so common to early science fiction, is differently perceived in this book. Olwen is human, yet alien: "From being the owner of the planet, she has become the stranger" (Hughes, 1982g, p. 17). Such a reversal of "alien" also reveals the new dimension of science fiction. Silverberg's (1976) observation of this genre applies equally to Keeper and other of Hughes' books. He has noted that:

science fiction offers us a unique way of examining the problems and dilemmas of our society more closely by projecting them against strange and unfamiliar backdrops, to attain a clearer perspective. The conflict between one culture and another has been the central tragedy of mankind for thousands of years: city against city, nation against nation, race against race, and even, possibly, in prehistoric days, species against species.
For all our long history of grief, we have not yet learned how to come to terms with the frictions caused by differences among human beings.

[Now] when science-fiction writers talk of the difficulties Earthmen have with aliens, they really speak of the fundamental and tragic difficulty we humans experience whenever we come in contact with anyone who is at all different from ourselves. The real aliens aren't citizens of space; they live just across the nearest boundary - or, perhaps, live right across the street (p. 11).

Keeper and its sequel The Guardian of Isis are pertinent reminders of our foibles, and that if we are to survive at all as a race it is because we can see beneath the skin of civilization, to the "humanness" which brings us into the celebratory fellowship of mankind.

The concept of alien will be reiterated in the sequel titled The Guardian of Isis, which Moher (1982) describes as "the opportunity to explore an imaginative world as faceted as the evening sky" (p. 30). It is Earth year 2136 A.D. but life for the settlers on Isis is backward, primitive and superstitious. The scientific knowledge brought from Earth by their forefathers has been lost, or deliberately destroyed by one man, the aging, manipulative president, Mark London, still embittered by his youthful shock. He has made Upper Isis taboo, replaced the history of Isis with distorted myths, and reduced the life of this deeply
anti-feminist society to the Primitive Agricultural Stage. This restricted existence is accepted without question, all except for the grandson and namesake of Jody N'Komo, who was a small boy and a minor character in the first book. His shrewd, questing mind, which cannot accept the autocratic power of the president, leads to his banishment from the valley and, ultimately, to his discovery of the truth.

Cunningly, Mark London has contrived to rid himself of this young upstart whose curiosity he sees as a threat that will undermine his leadership. Able to convince other elders to give their assent, London sees that Jody is sent as an emissary to seek help from the Shining One to save the Valley from an impending flood. London in reality is sending the boy to his death. Survival for humans in the rarefied reaches of Upper Isis would be a miracle and Jody knows that Mark's "polite fiction" (Hughes, 1982b, p. 74) disguises this more chilling reason for his expulsion. But Jody, who builds small machines, who has learned to use his sling more effectively to hunt for food and investigated the practical uses of Guardian's gifts, is not to be deterred. Though fearful of stories insidiously spread by London of "That Old Woman, the Ugly One, who waits on the other side of every man's last sleep" (p. 74), he sets forth on his mission to Upper Isis.
Jody survives his harrowing climb, described vigorously by Hughes, and does indeed meet Guardian and the now elderly Olwen. He finds that Mark London has perpetuated the myths of Guardian as the Shining One, a remote god to be venerated for fear of reprisal, and transformed the memory of Olwen into monster, the bringer of Death. In so doing, Mark has perverted the true natures of the two who have cared for Isis from the beginning, all because of his inability to move beyond his insufferable prejudice. For him, it is "easier to change reality than to face it as it was" (p. 104), "better to live a lie and be comfortable" (p. 120), a view clung to with stubborness through the years. Subtly, there is introduced the concept of how democracy can go awry when history is allowed to be altered by those in power.

But for Jody it is more than tenacity that motivates; it is a desire for the truth, for an understanding of other peoples, other ways of perceiving reality, a mode of perception denied Mark London. When he initially meets Olwen, he is both repulsed and fascinated, but later as he gets to know her better he exclaims with genuine emotion: "But you are beautiful. You could never have been disgusting. Never!" (p. 112). Unlike London who "loved the mask. The lie. Not the real [Olwen] that was behind the mask" (p. 113), Jody penetrates beneath the surface. And what he discovers is fine, rare. Their mutual affection, one
based on love and respect, is discussed in lucid prose which
gives credence to the relationship.

This is a superb sequel. In Jody, Hughes "has created a
compelling character.... He represents the free spirit of human
thought unhampered by cultural restrictions which dares to create
new patterns" (Risacher, 1983, p. 77). His clash with the presi-
dent, who will not tolerate anyone who questions the strict laws
and taboos he invented, hearkens to all those gifted, imaginative
souls who through the centuries have had to contend with the
atrophying aspects of human nature which stifle creativity. His
rescue of his people from the flood is not without risk, but with
Olwen's wisdom and Guardian's technical sophistication Jody averts
disaster. With his return to his people, there is implied an
understanding that superstition cannot be eradicated in short
measure but is effected carefully, over time.

Sutherland (1986) included this sequel, like its predecessor,
on her list of the best in children's books from 1979 to 1984.
Says she: "This has a strong protagonist, good structure and
pace, and a smooth, disciplined style" (p. 203). Crouch (1981)
waxes more eloquent:

It is a long time since I was so impressed
by a book about the future. Monica Hughes tells
a grand story; she is also a serious anthropologist
and philosopher and she knows how the human mind
works....
[The story] is told with seriousness and dignity, but also with fun, .... Monica Hughes brings before us the strange world of Isis in all its beauty, and integrates setting and action and character in exemplary fashion. Her book is an excellent 'read', a tract on society, and a relevant commentary on the history of our own times (p. 212).

John Christopher, when interviewed by Gough (1984) about his science fiction, said that he found "a special appeal in aspects of the feudal ethos" but "[hoped] ... that [he managed] to point out the disadvantages of adhering to a narrow range of values as well" (p. 34). While this view could apply to Guardian, Christopher's notion that he is "more concerned with what happens inside the individual than what happens to society as a whole" (p. 97) would not characterize this work by Hughes. For her, both the individual and society are of concern, for personal crises intersect with larger social issues. The implication, therefore, is that Jody's return to his society is to effect a change for the better.

As reader, therefore, the assumption is that wherever protagonists like Jody are to be found, the future is not a cause for pessimism. But the answer is not joyful. As Hughes (1984a) relates, she was "frustrated that [her] hero (since he was only twelve) was unable to effect the necessary changes" (p. 74). So, in The Isis Pedlar (1983b), last in the Isis trilogy, which traces
the evolution of a society through three generations, the superstitious, stagnant agricultural community still abounds. Guardian is inert, mourning the death of Olwen. Before her death she had forbidden him to help the settlers for fear of causing culture shock. Ever sensitive, Olwen had realized their primitive ways would be unable to grasp the advanced technology which Guardian represented. So Guardian has placed the planet in quarantine, sending out a space signal to prevent travellers from landing, effectively preventing intrusion into this myopic universe.

The opening scene produces the catalyst for social change in the appearance of Michael Joseph Flynn, in his creaky spaceship, a convincing, devilishly smooth-tongued Irishman who ignores the quarantine regulation. He cheats and corrupts the inhabitants of Isis by persuading them to abandon their farming to mine precious stones for his own use. Flynn's magic firestone, his strange, delicious, addictive Ambrosia, and the Forever Machine are all magician's tricks. They would be looked askance at by a more sophisticated society, but are irresistible to this gullible, agrarian group. Mike's intelligent daughter Moira, with the help of two allies, David N'Kumo, nephew of Jody and great-grandson of one of the original settlers, and Guardian, now reactivated, is able to avert disaster of great magnitude.
Moira epitomizes a central conflict, that of loyalty to kin, to close blood ties, or to that of society at large. Which route should one take? Counterpoised between these two decisions stands this young heroine who struggles through a moral dilemma. In taking a stand she achieves a more mature, responsible attitude toward life and the undying admiration of David whose respect for her grows into love.

In The Ascent of Man the late Jacob Bronowski (1973) reminds us that "man is the only one who is not locked into his environment. His imagination, his reason, his emotional subtlety and toughness make it possible not to accept the environment, but to change it" (p. 19). Jody N'Kumo takes over the leadership from Mark's son, Roger London, a weak and reactionary man, and for the first time there is optimism about the planet's future. He and David are part of the new generation that will regain knowledge of the truth, developing from their primitive stage at their own pace.

The conclusion of this last book in the trilogy is aesthetically satisfying, but like many of Hughes' stories, there is an underlying pathos. Mike, with his gypsy mentality, must forever roam the galaxies for it is his nature to be a free being. Moira chooses to remain on Isis with David. There is pain at the parting of father and daughter, but a realization that the larger good has been achieved. In the process Hughes draws parallels
between Earth's political and sociological problems and those of Isis, which gives the book its believable tone (Hammond, 1983, p. 583).

Hughes in adroit fashion creates in Guardian a figure who commands attention and our respect. In The Keeper of the Isis Light when Olwen at the conclusion discovers that perhaps loneliness is an essential part of being human, she looks across at Guardian's golden figure and "a sudden surge of tenderness" (Hughes, 1981c, p. 136) overwhelms her. In this dialogue between Olwen and Guardian, eloquent in its simplicity, his robot qualities evoke pathos because he cannot feel as humans do. Indeed he has not even the capacity for laughter:

Oh, Guardian!
What's the matter?
Nothing. I love you. But I just realized something so sad. When I die, then you will be all alone. You will have no one.
That is all right, Olwen. You must not be distressed. After all, I am not human. DaCoPs do not have the capacity to be lonely.
Olwen nodded and watched him walk stiffly across the living room to the kitchen.
Poor Guardian, she whispered (p. 136).

But imperceptibly, throughout the trilogy Guardian, while still robot, a fact never forgotten by the reader, acquires feeling qualities, which in a strange sense make him vulnerable, eliciting sympathy. Hughes (1984a) has been challenged about Guardian's "humanness." She says: "He grew quite without my volition,
learning, I suppose, through his service to Olwen, the meaning of love" (p. 74). That Mike, ever the vagabond, takes Guardian with him on further galactic adventures seems fitting and entirely credible. For Guardian, in his new life, assumes Moira's role in looking after the mercurial Mike. He becomes not simply robot, but a life filled with new purpose.

The mythic qualities which give Isis its being demonstrate the artist's craft, which draws from disparate sources to create a unified whole. Olwen is both keeper of the Isis light and Isis, Goddess of Egyptian myth. Like that great goddess who was associated with death but who restored Osiris, her dismembered husband, to life, so too is Olwen seen in the role of restorer when she rescues Jody from the vicious cosmic storm in Keeper. As Isis, Olwen is the exemplary mother who takes pains to nurse, protect, and care for the settlers and the planet. But unlike the goddess "whose whole being is impenetrable" (Encyclopedia of World Mythology, 1975, p. 93), Olwen is always human, not divine. Janet Lunn's musing that perhaps the landscape and mythology of Egypt have been unconsciously infused into these writings seems plausible (Moore and Scanlan, 1986, p. 24). Elements of myth are discerned in Flynn as the amoral trickster of yore, in Guardian's elevation to deified god, and in Olwen as harbinger of death, all of whom echo tales spun by early man.
Jonas (1986) in describing what contributes to the success "both artistic and commercial—of a series is the invented environment be so rich in details and interconnections that it becomes a place (and a state of mind) that readers yearn to re-enter, whether for escape or illumination" (p. 33). For Eudora Welty (1957) place has a great deal to do with good writing, a view supported by Eleanor Cameron (1969), who, in her essay entitled "The Country of the Mind", believes that the very best writing for children grows out of an author's involvement with a particular place (pp. 163-202). She argues that an author's intensely felt feeling for place is the foundation on which significant works of fiction are built.

In the trilogy, Hughes evokes place with a beauty of words, sometimes glowing, sometimes sparse, that nevertheless conveys the emotional feeling of Isis. From the beginning, the land supports the action, a silent watcher of an unfolding drama enacted over time. Hughes' artistry in describing the cosmic storms, the green skies and red mountains, the air redolent of the cactus flower which blooms on Upper Isis, and the topography in general makes for the reader's familiarity with the terrain. Place creates the mood of tension in the settler's struggles to survive and is a physical symbol for the personal tensions and resolution between characters. And finally, in her capturing of the sense of isolation
and timelessness of Isis there is transmitted the Canadian landscape in its awesome, elemental splendour. It could be said that the difficult transition from the real world to the science fiction world, the manipulation of present and past, is accomplished by Hughes' versatile construction of place. It may well be that like Hunter in the Dark, Hughes will be most remembered in science fiction for this trilogy which Ellis (1984) considers Hughes' "major science fiction" (p. 661).

That strong sense of place is also evident in Ring-Rise Ring-Set, runner up for the Guardian Award in 1983. It is more than just a good "read", for the story provokes much thought about different issues. Set in the Canadian Arctic region, this book tells of an impending ice age signalled by an ominous dark ring in the sky. A young girl stows away on a scientific expedition that seeks a solution to this problem, little realizing her life will be irrevocably changed.

Liza Monroe chafes at the restrictions that keep her in the artificial, underground City. Resenting her culture's traditional sex roles, she complains: "Cooking? Cleaning? Keeping the City running? Huh! ... Why us? What's so special about you men that you do all the interesting stuff and we have to do whatever you don't want?" (Hughes, 1983e, p. 4). Bored by the male interpretations of her role, she is still conditioned to think of the
world outside as sterile, barren. The insulated shutters she puts up to keep out the cold symbolize her own limited vision, a denial of life: "Now she felt as if she were slowly blinding the City. First one eye. Then the next. And the next" (p. 1). Refused access to a scientific career because of poor grades, she feels restless and alienated since a life of mundane chores will now unfold. It is as if Hughes says that when crises occur, women are relegated to a subservient status in society as happened in The Guardian of Isis.

Stowing away is a foolhardy, reckless venture because Liza is ill equipped to contend with the harsh environment after the expedition team accidentally abandons her. She is captured by Namoonie, a member of an aboriginal tribe called the Ekoes. He mistakes Lisa for his lost fiancee, Iriook, and takes her to his family, where she must adapt to an alien world. In order to survive Liza deliberately assumes Iriook's identity, for the Ekoes think the mythic spirits have transformed the girl. Shifts in perspective occur because of alternating identities: "I must be Iriook, she thought. Liza was the dream, for if I were Liza I would go mad living like this. I am Iriook" (p. 5). As Iriook, she enjoys the Eko stories, accepting the tale of what happened to Iriook as her own experience. As Liza, the Ekoes are glimpsed through City eyes and she is revolted. They eat flesh, drink
blood, and smell of rancid fat. As Iriook, the objects in the sky are enormous black birds; as Liza, she knows them as aeroplanes. Only when nearly strangled by Namoonie's father, who fears her as an evil spirit, does Liza know she is not Iriook but someone from the City.

But these radical shifts in perception have made an indelible impression on Liza. From a headstrong, bored, irresponsible girl she becomes a caring, thoughtful individual. In adopting Eko ways she has begun to appreciate their loving relationships, realizing her own environment is harsh, sterile, and seemingly loveless. When a mysterious black substance covers the snow, threatening the life of the caribou and the Ekoes, she returns to the City with Namoonie to discover the cause. Even now, knowing herself to be Liza, the dual perspective is evidenced. In her first view of the City, the "four strange trees on the crest of a low hill... leafless and... twisted into unnatural shapes" (p. 72) are, in fact, solar collectors. In the City, Namoonie is seen as animal, "a bundle of dirty fur with tangled hair, torn fingernails" (p. 79). Even Liza, tidy since her City arrival, perceives Namoonie as such, but the memory that she, too, once looked unwashed and unkempt when she lived with the Ekoes now allows for a vision unclouded by ignorance and fear.
Her unshuttered mind comprehends that the death of the caribou, the staple diet of the Ekoes, is caused by City scientists whose temporary solution to the encroaching ice and snow ravages the environment. Her dual perspective enables her to make a choice, albeit a difficult one. She decides to remain with the Ekoes, not for selfish reasons of safety, but, motivated by altruism, she knows these people as humans. They are not aliens to be feared or reviled. Her very existence in the barren world out there is to be a constant challenge to the scientists to come up with safer methods to protect the fragile, ecological chain. Though the problem is real and the remedy elusive, Liza feels she is finally "breaking out of a chrysalis to become whatever she was destined to be from the beginning," for despite the prospect of decline she believes one must "still enjoy the now, and not spoil it by being afraid" (p. 122).

The two contrasting approaches to ecological matters reflect Hughes' strong feeling for conservation. To the Techs, science is a tool to be utilized to control nature, which is alien, threatening. To the Ekoes, man's necessarily close relationship with nature and wildlife is one of survival. The Techs view of the land is one of ownership. The Ekoes regard it as one of stewardship. There is a distinction. The Ekoes do not control but are in awe of the land's mysterious nature. Explained in terms of
myth, the Eko story of the Mouth of Paija illustrates the consequences of greed, for the land is not to be raped and pillaged but to be appreciated. The story is not a metaphorical explanation, a flight from our blighted world to an absorption of a primitive vision of the world, a state to which modern man sometimes years to return. Rather, Hughes' concern is, as in Conshelf and Earthdark, with trying to effect a more harmonious balance between science and nature.

This book and Beyond the Dark River, in which the Hutterite and Indian tribal societies are described, "offer accurate, meticulously researched portraits of the customs, values, and modes of perception of contemporary North American sub-cultures" (Rubio, 1983, p. 391). The migratory familial society is even now under attack for their increasing contact with white man's technology. Hughes' sensitivity to such concerns has prompted this fine assessment: "Monica Hughes, ..., is one of the most formidable minds among those who today write what may be called, very loosely, science fiction. Her science is sound, but her social conscience and her understanding of the human heart make her fiction outstanding" (Crouch, 1982, p. 152).

Beckoning Lights (1982a), whose setting, like Ring-Rise Ring-Set is Canadian, first appeared in an anthology, Western Moods, in
1979 which was used in Alberta schools. Hughes' novella illustrated "An Uncanny Mood", one aspect of the anthology's predominant theme which depicted the many moods of the West. As a tale it was not accessible to the public at large until its publication by J.M. LeBel. The story, aimed at a younger audience, around fourth and fifth grade, revolves around an encounter with a UFO.

Julia and her brother Jack Christie are telepathic twins, an ability they prefer keeping secret for fear of ridicule. Although twins, they are unalike. Julia has a poor self-image: "There's nothing special about me. I'm over weight and I'm not as smart as Jack, and I'm scared of so many stupid things, like being shut in closets or elevators and being alone" (Hughes, 1982a, p. 8). Jack, by contrast, exudes confidence. For him, "danger was like the relish on the hamburger" (p. 11). Julia's overcoming her claustrophobia is central to the action.

When they accompany their geologist father and two of his students, one Indian, one white, on a field trip into the Rockies they encounter an unidentified flying object. Jack, being more venturesome, draws near and is immediately taken aboard, along with his father. It is then the gift of telepathy becomes critical for both the survival of the alien planet and Julia's kin. Though terrified, Julia musters courage to communicate with Jack
inside the spaceship. In turn, the aliens communicate with both the children through this mind-to-mind transmission. In a last desperate effort to save their race from extinction these Brinians must acquire a special, rare fungus from Earth. Julia overcomes her claustrophobia by going into the deepest recesses of a cave to find this life-saving fungus which will combat the sickness on the planet Brini-la. The aliens eventually leave after releasing Jack and his father. As they did on a previous occasion in Earth's history, the aliens leave behind a legacy. A new magnetic force theory learned by Mr. Christie while aboard the alien vessel will make a worthwhile contribution to the world. But an even greater gift is Julia's self-assured, confident attitude for she is "not afraid any more ... of being lonely ... of new things ... of fear itself" (Hughes, 1982a, p. 79).

In this narrative, told through Julia's point of view, patterns emerge which are accorded a deeper treatment elsewhere. The maturation of the central character is one; telepathy is another. Although Julia is not as developed or complex as other of Hughes' heroines, her expression of courage when facing the unknown is one with whom young readers could identify.

Another pattern is that of the alien, explored in a different manner in the Isis trilogy. In much of science fiction
aliens have been depicted as monstrous, cold, sullen, whose evil surrounds us in visible, palpable forms or in the fear they induce. Whether it be the shadow of a stranger cast across a picnic table, or nocturnal sounds—a rustle, a whisper, a squeak—that seem to signal a malign presence close by, aliens have struck terror because they wreak vengeance and are curiously unfeeling. In this story aliens are "a sad and noble race" (p. 47) capable of kindnesses. In the short story "Lights Over Loon Lake" such solicitude is reciprocated when two children return an alien to his fold. Even in such uncomplicated tales is the implication that when face to face with such beings, the men of earth must learn to think in new patterns and come to terms with cultures that appear outlandish.

Frederik Pohl (1982) has said of science fiction:

"There is no better writing in the world than the best science fiction, and no more exciting, provocative, and insightful examinations of the human condition.... Arthur C. Clarke was asked once why he preferred to write science fiction. He replied, 'Because it is the only literature that concerns itself with reality.' I agree, if I can interpret his 'reality' as that single immense reality which confronts all of us, the reality of change. Science fiction is the literature of change...."

"Science fiction ... requires almost as much work from the reader as from the writer; it requires an effort to understand realities
that do not at present exist, and a willingness to stretch the imagination (pp. 111-112).

Hughes' science fiction appeals to the imagination because the stories not only afford glimpses of the challenging wider world of tomorrow but also sensitively explore truths of the human condition. "One reason why courses in science fiction have been spreading from colleges to high schools and lower" (p. 112) is as a result of such fine writers as Hughes.

Summary

The light hearted, whimsical approach that characterized earlier science fiction in general surrenders to a more reflective, thoughtful, assured kind of writing in Hughes' works. Different modes of perceiving reality are examined. Adventures by a visitor or outsider compel evaluation of two contrasting cultures; exposure to the new forces a reevaluation of the old. Whether set in the near or far distant future, the stories, based on extrapolations from existing technology, offer new perspectives for the characters and provide insights into contemporary society. Many themes permeate Hughes' books, such as the ecological havoc wreaked by technological expansion, exploitation of dependent cultures by those more advanced, the excessive reliance on technology, the search for identity, and prejudice. Hughes' characters are ordinary, credible adolescents who experience yearnings such as awakening
sexuality; they chafe at restrictions, question the reigning mores, and are altruistic. In her writings, Hughes has captured the psychological, intellectual and emotional tensions of this age group. The optimism portrayed is not false, for maturity is always achieved at a cost. Though some of the stories have a Canadian flavour they reach out to embrace the universal. Ideas for books come from Hughes' own experiences and emotions and are transformed into science fiction. Myth, patterns such as the alien, the journey, and the Egyptian Goddess Isis, inform and enrich her science fiction. It can be seen that science fiction is Hughes' metier.
Neil Philip's (1981) words could have been written with Hughes in mind for they are pertinent to her writings. He says:

A literature of ideas has been produced for children in our culture; but it is a literature of ideas in action. The need to embody the abstract in the concrete - to story, not to analyse or philosophise - has produced a body of work which is in many ways more coherent, more artistically satisfying, than writing on similar themes for adults, because the writer for children is forced to subdue thought to art (p. 162).

As LeGuin (1982) has noted, it is easy to succumb "to the lure of the pulpit" particularly for the science fiction writer "who deals more directly than most novelists with ideas, whose metaphors are shaped by or embody ideas, and who therefore is always in danger of inextricably confusing ideas with opinions" (p. 151). But Hughes' aim is to tell good exciting tales which children and young adults can enjoy in a manner that avoids didacticism. As an artist deeply serious and passionate about her work, she tells not simply entertaining stories, for she is able to embody "the abstract in the concrete". Or, as LeGuin, who distinguishes between hack work
and art would say, art is "solid, and involves the inward dimension" (p. 233). So too, is Hughes' science fiction possessed of the substantial, for reading her works is not a "passive reaction, but an action, involving the mind, the emotions, and the will" (p. 220).

Hughes has written books in various genres but, as Ellis (1984) has correctly assessed, "it is in science fiction that her unique talents are given free rein" (p. 661). This chapter will examine Hughes' science fiction since 1982 and her short stories. Because she is a writer with a questing mind, one who constantly challenges, her latest work, Sandwriter, will be explored as it signals a new direction, a new frontier for Hughes in the realm of fantasy.

Science Fiction Novels Since 1982

Hughes takes an imaginative leap forward into deep space and a faraway future in her book Space Trap, published in 1983. While the story does not possess the mythic resonance of the Isis trilogy, the result is nonetheless a tense, at times humorous and thrilling narrative which would appeal to readers of eleven and twelve, an age group younger than Hughes' usual audience. A young girl and her siblings accompany their parents on a Planet Changing Expedition from their home planet of Eden to Delta Parvonis Three.
Valerie Spencer, her high school brother Frank, and infant sister walk into a trap and are mysteriously whisked across galaxies by an alien civilization who elect to sell them as pets, send them to zoos, or treat them as specimens for laboratory research.

The idea of "alien" takes an interesting slant in this book. As a prisoner in the auction cage, Valerie is jibed, poked, and ridiculed by strange creatures engaged in contraband animal trading. These creatures, "two legged and two-armed, ... huge and thickset and ungainly, their heads set right between their shoulders with little or no neck" with eyes "[sticking] out on stalks like those of a snail" (Hughes, 1983f, p. 14) see Valerie the human as ugly, different. This ironic reversal of alien viewing human as "alien" is reinforced when Dr. Mushni, one of the "popeyes" as Valerie has named these beings, tells her: "The sight of a creature as ugly as yourself could cause a riot" (p. 31). Such a charge seems ironic, particularly when it is levelled by one who possesses a huge, wrinkled bald head, fleshy blobs for ears, a slit mouth, and whose blue eyes on the end of pink stalks "[wave] continuously like a strange sea plant" (p. 21). Dr. Mushni's very presence infuriates and disgusts Valerie, but she remains silent.

These differing perceptions of reality are also extended to the discussion between Valerie and Dr. Mushni, who, as linguist, finds Valerie a specimen worthy of study. Valerie's argument that
it would be futile to return animals on her planet to the wild because of the expense involved is used by Dr. Mushni to his advantage. He shrewdly denies her request to be returned home for exactly the same reason, maintaining that the cost of sending her would be prohibitive. The altercation that ensues between the two shows not only different perceptions of "humanity" but also demonstrates Hughes' ability to embody the abstract in the concrete without allowing interference with the strong story line:

    Do you know how far it is to that desert planet where we found you? Well, neither do I, I'm no astronomer, but it could be anywhere up to six parsecs. And you want us to send you back! He began to shake again.

    That's different. I'm a person. We don't do that to people back home, only to animals.

    And who is to decide what is an animal and what is a person? If I appeared on your home planet would you consider me a person? And who knows, perhaps a wallaroo is a person - to a wallaroo....

    Valerie was no longer listening. She had told Susan that she would get her back home. And I will, she promised herself (pp. 23-24).

    Young (1983) has said that "the family involved in this Sci-Fi story are just like the family from which the reader probably comes. Dad goes off on field trips, Mum has computer work to do and the three children argue, quarrel and think they are unjustly
put upon" (p. 258). While such an assessment would suggest a note of realism as seen in Valerie's heartfelt wish for her parents to be with her during her trials, there is superimposed a fairy tale tone and a dream-like quality that derives from nightmare, reminiscent of Dorothy's trip through Oz. Unlike the boring greyness of the planet Delta Parvonis Three, Valerie, like Lewis Carroll's Alice, suddenly plummets into a technicoloured wonderland which has the aura of a fantastical dream. Bright enormous houses and odoriferous cabbage trees dot the uncommon landscape; yellow roads intersect purple ones; twin suns by turn vivid orange, red, and white, radiate over a cast of unusual characters who traverse this strange planet's surface. Isnek Ansnek, a robot, proves to be an endearing yet improbable candidate for the role of knight errant who helps rescue the fair damsel Valerie and her relatives from distress. He and such assorted characters as the pink blob-creature Fifth Daughter, the wondrous Moab, a people-eating forest that is "a brilliant idea nicely described" (p. 258), and the "White Tower gleaming palely against the blackness of the carnivorous forest behind it" (Hughes, 1983f, p. 87) further enhance this fairy tale, dream-like element. Interestingly, such seemingly disparate elements do not clash with the technological aspects of this science fiction.
Gentle humour gives a lightness and buoyancy to Space Trap, especially in the depiction of the robot Mr. Isnek Asnek, whose rational charm is hard to resist. His dry, specific instructions to Valerie to reassemble his torso from the specimen drawer in which he had been ignominiously placed by the aliens is both amusing and ironic. It is here one sees Hughes is not above taking a gently satiric poke at certain science fiction conventions. When Asnek politely declines Valerie's request to help rescue her and her brother and sister now that he has been put together, she reminds him: "Don't you have some directive about putting the safety of humans before your own needs?" (p. 49). The robot laughingly replies: "Oh, the old Asimov rules for robots.... My goodness, that was all a very long time ago, wasn't it? I'm happy to say that, on Ilenius at least, we robots have had our freedom for many centuries" (p. 49). But the chuckles reserved for Asnek are not feelings the reader has for Guardian in the Isis trilogy, where sympathy and compassion are the more likely reactions.

Telepathy, first seen in Beckoning Lights, is a trait of Fifth Daughter, the pink blob humanoid. With this ability she is able to work with Valerie, her brother Frank, little Susan, and other aliens who had been caught by the space trap to generate a fear of fire that is communicated to the popeyes, who flee in terror. Only then can the White Tower be entered where the Matter
Transmitter, or space trap, is located. As a literary device, telepathy proves effective; but more importantly, Hughes appears to be saying that through co-operation and understanding, ordinary individuals can effect a change against evil, because all work as a team, linking hands and minds in a common purpose. As an idea, telepathy will be more fully explored in *The Dream Catcher*.

The ending of this fast-paced narrative in which everyone escapes from the popeyes is achieved in an entertaining fashion. The mechanistic details are subordinated to the story line, and while the depth of characterization found in other tales is not in such evidence here, Valerie achieves maturity through her adventures in a plausible manner. More importantly, she learns to question "what really is progress?" (p. 152). The Matter Transmitter stolen by the popeyes and misused for their own purposes, in the wider context, is a symbol of power that could be wielded by anyone, whether alien or human, to the detriment of all. Valerie's determination that technology must not be abused leads her to resolve that she must "work hard at growing up" (p. 153) so that maybe one day she could be part of the decisions to effect a better global understanding. That global understanding also entails the re-education rather than annihilation of the popeyes. The implication is not that these creatures be brain-washed into subjection, but rather, through active educational
engagement with other worlds, they will change their perceptions for the better. But, as Hughes and Valerie both know, such changes take time. Nevertheless, the tone is cheerful, making for a story that young readers would appreciate.

With the publication of Devil on My Back in 1984 Hughes returns to the older reader and to the idea of a computer world which was the theme of The Tomorrow City. The story arose from a "suggestion in an article on computer technology that one day microprocessors might actually be attached to the human body, rather like contact lenses or artificial limbs" (Hughes, 1985c, p. 67). In the totally protected computer controlled environment of ArcOne, status is determined by the heavy information paks plugged into the sockets located on each person's neck. The rigid class system imposed by the computer incites rebellion among the lowly slaves. Tomi, son of the Overlord of ArcOne, narrowly escapes with his life and is precipitated into the outside world, where he is devastated to learn the truth of what lies behind the computer system of ArcOne.

This combination of a futuristic society and a survival tale is well crafted. Tomi, the survivor, realizes his carefully programmed infopaks are of little use in the wild. He stumbles about through the dense undergrowth, growing more tired and hungry. His flaccid body, weighted down by the infopaks, cannot combat
the environment. In desperation he unknowingly eats berries that are poisonous, then loses consciousness. He wakes to learn he has been befriended and cared for by a group of ex-slaves who have escaped from ArcOne over a period of time. Only later when he relies on his own inner resourcefulness is Tomi able to survive in what would have otherwise been a hostile environment. For one who had been pampered for all his fourteen years, the experience becomes cathartic. He learns to shoot an arrow straight and true, where to find edible berries and roots, and how to climb trees.

But beneath the survival story lies a more serious issue about the nature of wisdom as opposed to factual knowledge. It is while Tomi lives in this simple Arcadian idyll, enjoying a freedom never previously experienced, that he learns what has been missing in ArcOne. In that impersonal, programmed universe dedicated to knowledge, humanity has lost sight of itself. And what shatters Tomi is learning from the ex-slaves how this turn of events came about. Their narration, which takes on the tone of myth, unveils an unusual story. In the wake of the Age of Confusion, the universities had filled the role taken by the monks in the Middle Ages in attempting to preserve civilization against the barbarian. Seeds are stored and knowledge is duplicated in access paks conferred on students at the age of initiation into manhood.
But, like many well-intentioned, far-sighted human plans, this one is corrupted in time. Instead of learning, knowledge is hoarded and subverted, hierarchies grow, and slavery begins. Rigid in their attitudes, prisoners of their own system, these people have lost their true purpose. And the horror is in knowing that Lord Bentt, Tomi's father continues to perpetuate this evil.

For Tomi, the revelation threatens his very sanity. With terrible clarity he remembers the faces of friends, their agonies as their sockets refuse the implants, the indignities suffered by the slaves, and his father's Machiavellian scheming. The scene in which Tomi's shame threatens to overwhelm him is poignant and tense, vividly capturing adolescent feelings of betrayal:

He had no notion of where he was going. He wanted only to escape from the people who knew his shame, who had known it from the first moment he had so proudly given his name. Before, when Tomi had run from the village, he had been running home. Now he had no home, no place to run to. Only away.

His feet ran on. His hands warded off branches that whipped close to his face. He went downhill towards a gleam of silvery light. He broke out of the trees and saw it was the image of the moon newly risen above the hill, lying on the dark water of the river, a shimmering pure whiteness.

To fall into that whiteness, to be lost in it forever and to forget, seemed to be the most natural thing in the world to do. Without engaging his will or his brain Tomi let
his feet carry him down the hill, across the shingle and into the water. It accepted him, pulled him down into himself, wrapped him in darkness...

His breathing reflex forced his diaphragm down. His lungs sucked in water. His arms and legs thrashed wildly and he broke through and blackness into silver moonlight, choking and spitting. He fought desperately to keep his head up in the white light, away from the black. He was moving down river, but the whiteness seemed to move with him (Hughes, 1985b, p. 95).

Tomi's touching river bottom and coming up again become symbolic of his new awareness, clearer perceptions. Lying "with his cheek in the slime" (p. 95) he is no better than his father and those scientists in ArcOne for he, however unconsciously, has helped continue the status quo. The painful removal of his infopaks and lifepak on which he has for so long relied signals a new maturity and independence, a turning point.

This rebirth, where factual knowledge is replaced by dawning wisdom, results in Tomi's decision to return to his own community. It means leaving all he cares about, in particular Rowan, a beautiful, red haired girl, child of ex-slaves, whom he dearly loves. The choice is not easy but Tomi knows his responsibility. The once pale, flabby boy, stooped with the weight of the infopaks returns home tall, bronzed, and full of vigour. In a surprising twist
he finds his father, Lord Bentt, is not the evil monster he had perceived him to be.

Fisher (1984) describes this father-son relationship as being "crucial to the story, [making] it one of the most moving and thoughtful of Monica Hughes' remarkable sequence of speculative tales" (p. 4309). The boy discovers his father's wisdom. The Overlord has been fully aware of what has occurred in ArcOne and has understood the appalling consequences: "It was the Computer's fault. The Computer had structured life so totally that there was no room for escape, and worse, no desire for escape. Instead of being a shelter ArcOne had become a cosy prison" (Hughes, 1985b, p. 169). Only with mavericks like the slaves could survival and repopulation of the Earth in freedom and peace be effected. And so the father passes on to the son a "sacred trust" (p. 166). Tomi is to be the designer of dreams. He will use the computer to aid in this task so that the men and women of ArcOne "might reach out and risk and learn to live" (p. 169), rather than being comfortably ensconced in artificial, snug complacency under the Dome. "The implication of the denouement - that the young must seek to change their world rather than escape from it - gives the story the kind of philosophical underpinning that characterizes the best of science fiction" (Silvey, 1985, pp. 317-318).
Subtle warnings of the possibility of misuse and subsequent loss of freedom even when computers are used with the best of intentions underlie the story. The result is "a reflective text which some readers may find slow; and the communalism of the free people is rather idealised, with Healhand, Rowan and Swift seeming to be 'White Indians' in their noble goodness" (Hayhoe, 1984, p. 260). But, while the outside world appears too idyllic, the artificial world created by the computer is not. The contrast serves to highlight Hughes' mistrust of technology which man has allowed to get out of control. It is not that Hughes advocates a rejection of technology for a return to a more primitive, natural existence. As she has stated in her address "Computers in Fiction" to the Alberta Teachers' Association Computer Council:

As long as we keep our humanity clearly in front of us, and our sense of humor - this seems to be a trail singularly lacking in even the most advanced computer systems - I am sure we have nothing to fear, and much to learn, to enjoy and to be challenged by in this fistful of microchips (Hughes, 1985, March).

The Dream Catcher (1986d), sequel to Devil On My Back, is a complete novel in itself but also skillfully continues the story of Lord Tomi and Rowan. After the Age of Confusion, Arks had been set up in various parts of the world with no communication amongst them. Ark One had stored knowledge, especially
technological information, detailed in Devil On My Back. In Ark Three, a different strength had been developed. It is a perfect thought pattern called the Web, formed by the psychic joining of the minds of everyone. Ruth, a misfit, constantly disrupts the Web. It appears she possesses no talent, but surprises are in store for her and the Ark Three community.

Unable to see as her vocation that of Healer, Communicator, or Teacher, Ruth feels she is "a flaw in the design" (Hughes, 1986d, p. 13) of the Web. Possessed of psychokinetic powers of which she is as yet unaware, Ruth unconsciously slams doors, shatters glass, and breaks Web patterns with unwarranted intrusions of thoughts from the outside world. Her abject misery mirrors contemporary adolescent feelings of alienation because her peer group taunts her and the adult world reproves her for this difference. Rejected, vulnerable, Ruth tries to escape but finds the power of the Web too strong, for she is pulled back inside Ark Three. Only when she is placed in the Black Hole, a room "designed to insulate out the psychic emanations of the Ark and vice versa" (p. 44), is it learned Ruth has a rare, untrained gift, that of telepathy which can reach across great distances.

As Hughes has implied in her other books, each society, however worthy its intentions, could, through complacent, unquestioning attitudes, be bound for self-destruction. "Goads and
prickles are necessary" (p. 51) not only for the health of the Ark community but the world at large. Ruth is an Innovator, a maverick whose unusual, startling ability must not be regarded as an anomaly to be obviated by those who wish for a comfortable existence. When she is welcomed into a small group who, like herself are Innovators, possessing a similar gift, she then feels more at home. It is the adolescent who has found her niche.

Still, despite being part of a group, disturbing, and sometimes frightening dreams plague Ruth. Like filmed fragments, quick episodes from *Devil On My Back* flash across Ruth and the reader's consciousness. Tomi is seen in brief happenings, whether at work or through his various fears which are transmitted to Ruth, as is the auburn-haired girl Rowan and her agricultural community. Carefully, scrupulously, in a fashion more suspenseful than in *Devil On My Back*, Hughes allows the disparate pieces of the jigsaw to fit when Ruth is chosen to guide the expedition to find Ark One.

The journey leading to Ark One is described in brisk fashion. The lively pace enhances the growing awareness that Ruth is gaining in confidence, that her empathic powers are becoming more disciplined. In this matter she is aided by Luke, another young Innovator with whom she falls in love. And when Ark One is reached and all but she and another member of the expedition are captured, it is Ruth who risks her life. She overcomes her fears
regarding her sometimes erratic telepathic ability to help Luke, the leader. Together, they use the power of the Web to enter the vital computer through telepathic means and are able to travel along the circuits, altering the components to reform the society for the better. This scene, filled with tension, is gripping and believable. Should their endeavours have failed, the consequences for Overlord Bentt and all those on Ark One would have proved calamitous.

This help does not preclude using the talents of Luke, Ruth, and the other Innovators to search for other Arks. As with Devil Hughes' philosophical underpinning is a fine one for the adolescent: "To survive one must grow. To grow one must reach out. To reach out one must risk" (p. 56). In an immensely satisfying conclusion Ruth and Luke remain with Lord Bentt, his son Tomi, and all of Ark One to assist in building a new world. But it will not be artificial, as the final image of a honey bee buzzing from flower to flower suggests rejuvenation. Like the Biblical Ark where the world is given a second chance, these young Noahs will help renew their universe. As with Virginia Hamilton's (1978) Justice and Her Brothers, this changing human consciousness, represented by telepathic communication, suggests that a transformation toward a new human race is a vital necessity for survival.
Short Stories

Moravia has said that "in the works of every writer with any body of work to show for his effort, you will find recurrent themes" (DeDominicis & Johnson, 1981, p. 225). Such is the case with Hughes who, in her short stories, explores facets also found in her novels, the first brief tale being "Dragon-Food Cake."

First published in 1977 in the magazine Magook, this gentle story for students in the primary grades revolves around a little girl Marianne, who wanders away from a campsite. Completely lost, she is befriended by a shy dragon, the last of his species.

Hughes' concern for ecology is seen in the underlying theme, the protection of minority species. The tiny, amber-eyed, "curly-tailed spiny-backed fire-breathing blue-and-gold-scaled" (Hughes, 1977, p. 4) dragon, who proffers a delectable fat wedge of cake to the little girl, agitatedly begs her not to tell anyone about him. He explains how the world intruded, "always knocking at our cave doors and challenging us to duels. Claws against lances" (p. 6). Now, as he broodingly tells, he is the last of his kind. Marianne's promise to keep the dragon's secret is reassuring.

On the basic level Marianne demonstrates the survival techniques that characterize Mike Rankin's foray into the bush in Hunter in the Dark. She collects big and little sticks and attempts to light a fire as a knowledgeable Brownie has learned
to do. On a more serious level Hughes seems to say of the reality of dragons: If one believes they exist, the realm of faerie has been entered. Once there, the rare magic afforded by new and wonderful possibilities are to be cherished and enjoyed. "The Iron-Barred Door" (1982c), which won the Vicky Metcalf Short Story Award, presents a post-apocalyptic vision. Thirteen-year-old Rebecca is, like the Lady of Shalott, encased in a protective environment, a home more like a castle in its elegance. Her only company is George, for whom Guardian in the Isis trilogy is the prototype. Like Guardian, he has been programmed to take care of Rebecca's needs, nourishing both her mind and body. And yet despite her comfortable existence Rebecca feels "an emptiness in the heart and a sadness behind the eyes" (p. 62). One of the themes of The Keeper of the Isis Light, that "stasis is death" (Hughes, 1981c, p. 9), also pervades this short tale. Rebecca feels as if she is returning to a bygone era, seen in her imaginings of a clattering teacup on a polished table, the echo of a waltz from a now unused grand piano, and the "shiver of sound from a golden harp" (Hughes, 1982c, p. 62). The smooth marble stairs, and the upper level cloisters reinforce the image of "safety and permanence, of beautiful things that [have] endured without change or decay" (p. 61). It is a world of inaction, of arrested growth, stifling.
Only when George slips in a fall from the roof where he was fixing tiles and his microcircuit panels shatter is Rebecca precipitated into action. She opens the iron-barred door to the world outside; "whether into freedom or into a new kind of imprisonment" (p. 65) she does not know. Like Ann Burden, the protagonist of _Z for Zachariah_, who sought a new Eden, it is a choice Rebecca makes to search for other life rather than living as an isolate. Survival means to change, to grow, to risk. The implication is that survival is only effected if we reach out, or else humanity will atrophy through disuse. The final image is positive, for in the far distance Rebecca views a child's red and yellow kite rising into the sky.

Subtle shades of mystery and suspense invest this tale. Questions emerge. What happened to cause the tragedy? Who were Rebecca's parents? Why is there such a distancing between her home and the city? It is a tribute to Hughes' writing skills that such questions do not impinge on the story but linger in the mind afterwards, making for much more than a gimmicky technological yarn.

A more contemporary picturesque setting is that of "Lights Over Loon Lake" (1982d). This tale for students in grades two and three tells of a brother and sister who, with their parents, go camping in the Gatineau Hills of Canada and of their encounter
with a young alien. Like Spielberg's film hero E.T., who wants to return home, so too, does this pale, silver-suited creature whom Elaine calls Starchild.

Through telepathy, Elaine discovers this little, vulnerable child from outer space had wandered away when his parents had landed their spacecraft on Earth for repairs. Having injured his leg, he is trapped, unable to find his family. When the children return him to his transparently happy parents, Hughes sounds a note found in many of her novels, namely, that the alien is not always to be feared, for beauty has different forms. Lenz's (1983) comments in her essay "E.T.: A Cosmic Myth for Space-Age Children" could apply to this story:

If it is possible to "phone home" as E.T. does across light years, then space can be comprehended in human terms as our "larger home." Similarly, if it is possible for species so dissimilar as the human and the extra-terrestrial to love each other— and even to enjoy a telepathic sympathy— then surely there is hope for brotherhood on a cosmic scale. In opposition to the corrosive forces of hate and despair that pervade so much of public consciousness today, E.T. [and by extension, Starchild] provides a much needed "upbeat" myth to nurture the consciousness of space-age children with love and hope (p. 5).

No aliens intrude in the domain of "The Tutti-Frutti Tree" (1983g), written for primary children. Six children, from Robert, aged twelve, to Bruce, aged two, move with their parents from an
overcrowded apartment to a big, roomy old house complete with a back yard garden. The other children grow radishes, sun flowers, carrots, and onions, but little Bruce's optimism is such that he hopes a colourful ice cream tutti-frutti tree will burgeon in his patch. He determinedly cares for his section, yet nothing grows but pigweed. The other children in the family, armed with wire, tape and scissors, construct a beautiful tree bearing different fruits so as not to disappoint their young brother. It is a story which demonstrates that imagination is a requisite in life but, more importantly, it is one of caring, of an unselfishness which brings much joy and happiness.

Unlike the lightsome gaiety exuded by "The Tutti-Frutti Tree," the next story is an ominous yet compelling piece of short fiction. "Zone of Silence" (1984b) tells of an older man recently married, his young bride, and his son Roger by his first wife, now dead, who crash in a rented Piper Seminole plane in a remote desert region of northern Mexico. A taut, tightly constructed, beautifully written selection, the piece resonates in the mind even after the story is laid aside.

This is a selection subject to multiple interpretations. On a literal level the plane crash may be seen as having occurred in actuality in an area similar to the Bermuda Triangle, a baffling "zone of silence". Its dark force, the alien Stranger,
has reached up from the "cold, sad core of its being" (p. 128) to scan and feel the skies "like the wavering pencil of a searchlight" (p. 128) and has drawn down the plane like a magnet. Only Roger, the sensitive adolescent, hears the Stranger's invitation to share his loneliness, his vigil. While the plaint appears genuine, as of one isolated for too long and needing humanity to feel alive, the undercurrent is one of foreboding, of menace. And, like Circe luring sailors to their doom, so too, does Roger seem to be headed for peril.

As a psychological thriller, it could be about unfulfilled adolescent sexuality. Susan, his father's bride, is only eight years older than Roger, "small and blond and spectacular" (p. 127). Roger's fanciful thoughts of encircling his arms around her waist make him blush. Her expensive alpaca sweater, "silky and warm" (p. 34), allows him to imagine what it would be like to caress her hair. He is even afraid his father may be able to read "the thoughts that ricocheted around in his head" (p. 124). So Roger's leaving the plane may be symbolic of his severance of a relationship he feels is almost incestuous. But why is he completely seduced by the hypnotic lure of the music which fills his head and prevents his hearing the whirl of helicopter blades which one presumes is on a rescue mission? This is for the reader to decide.
The tale, still psychological, has the quality of dream, for the landscape is depicted "as unreal and empty as Mars" (p. 130). The Stranger, inserted at points in the narrative, conveys the fragmented effect of nightmare. Restlessly stirring, beckoning, it is that part of Roger who has as yet not found self. Like the Stranger, he has "retreated into the cold loneliness at the center of [his] being" (p. 122) waiting for he knows not what. The bickering and arguing between bored, petulant Susan and his defensive father signals a marriage slowly fraying, the generation gap evident. The young man, caught between, puts on headsets to obliterate this painful reality, listening instead to mesmerizing music. His retreat could be viewed as a descent into insanity within the context of the dream, or as death by suicide, or normal adolescent withdrawal into self as the last refuge against tribulations. Even more chilling, the dream could be reality played out against a barren, parched backdrop. Of all Hughes' short fiction, "Zone of Silence" is subject to the most nuances of interpretation.

Published in 1986, "Chris and Sandy" begins in an innocuous manner. All is comfortable and warm on the home front. Father, a professional type, engages in long mathematical calculations while the son does his homework. Lonely, Chris is glad of Sandy, his lively, mischievous television friend, who also participates
in the computer lessons. But clues suggest things are not as they seem. The red light on the front door is now green, Chris drinks synthetic milk, and he eats from a package marked SKL#1.

This post-Armageddon tale is, like "The Iron-Barred Door", one about action versus inaction, of taking risks as opposed to living the hermit-like existence of Chris' father. Even if his father does find the answer to the problem, which is never clearly defined, he would leave the decisions regarding the solution to others, if indeed there are any people left. It becomes clear that his father will never leave through the front door, now marked with a green signal. Chris, though shocked to find that Sandy is no more than his alter ego, the part of himself that enjoyed life, does not retreat. With the help of the computer and his freckled alter ego, he will search for other intelligent life in the universe. While not as complex as "The Iron-Barred Door", the underlying theme is that adolescents should not take a nihilistic stance, but seek to change the world by positive means.

"The Ice Riders" (1986e) is a world removed from the enclosed sterile shelters of the post-holocaust time frame. Tangy, salt water air pervades this piece about Gramps, who has an improbable dream of bringing icebergs from the South Pole to California. His seining partner of forty years, Ole Harg, and
his orphaned grandchildren, Jon and Mandy, assist in what Jon perceives is a hare-brained scheme. While the conception is flawed and Gramps dies before his dream is realized, the inference is that without our dreams we would atrophy. Columbus would not have reached the New World nor Armstrong have touched the Moon's surface had humanity not actively dared. Gramps may have risked and lost, but as a pioneer he has paved the way for others to make the arid, parched Californian desert bloom again. The story, which begins in flashback with a storm-at-sea sequence, would appeal to children in grades five and six.

Last in Hughes' short fiction to date, "The Singing Float" (1986), is to be found in Dragons and Dreams: A Collection of New Fantasy and Science Fiction Stories. Jane Yolen, in the introduction to the collection, writes: "Albert Einstein once wrote that 'imagination is more important than knowledge,' yet it is his work that has helped us dream realistically about going to the stars" (p. ix). This tale, like all of Hughes' other selections, helps us dream realistically about new possibilities without losing sight of the imaginative.

While beach combing, Melissa discovers a smoky, iridescent, blown glass float, a rare find since Japanese fisherfolk now utilize gaudy green and pink plastic floats to hold up their gill nets and mark their traps. Even when a gift shop owner tempts the girl
to sell it by offering a large sum, Melissa feels strangely compelled to refuse. Its magic is even felt by Melissa's mother, but she is too mired in everyday concerns to do much more than momentarily pause. Father believes Melissa is bewitched by this perfect globe the size of a grapefruit. It seems that she is under its spell since a high, clear singing drew her to finding the float among the tangled seaweed.

Through some force into her mind comes the word "freedom". Melissa has to make a conscious choice: whether to break the float or keep it as a coffin. But for whom? The resolution of the action is not only aesthetically satisfying, but meaningful. She shatters the float and for a moment experiences intense happiness, for fleetingly glimpsed is a "beautiful face, small and pale as carved ivory" (p. 148). Suddenly, Melissa knows this was a princess imprisoned by a Japanese ogre.

Its fairy-tale quality and the language, which is neither prosaic nor condescending, make for a short story that is enjoyable reading. Melissa as rescuer is portrayed first as a collector of only the fine and the rare. Her liberating act is significant, for she is now unencumbered. From being the acquisitive possessor of beauty she is led to a new appreciation, symbolized by the appearance of the perfect double rainbow at the conclusion of the tale. There is the impression that though the adult world
may have forgotten what it is to wonder, to feel awe, the child
world knows that magic still exists, whether it be in a glass
float or in nature. All one need do is look and listen closely.

Ellis (1984) has maintained that in Hughes' works there is
a gentleness, a trait singularly lacking in science fiction:

The hairsbreadth escapes, the exotic flora and
fauna, the humanoids, the vast intergalactic
reaches, the villains and the heroes - are all
enclosed in one overriding concern, subtle but
ever-present: the value of kindness. This
theme seems a rather nonrobust one for science
fiction. But Monica Hughes manages to clothe
the homey quality in flesh and blood (or in
pink-blob tissue or high-technological robot
metal) to give it strength and resilience
(p. 664).

That assessment is valid, applying as much to "The Singing Float",
a tale of fantasy, as it does to Hughes' science fiction.

New Directions

Lynn (1983) distinguishes between tales of fantasy and
science fiction by saying that the latter "involve a future made
more or less possible by scientific or technological advances"
(p. 1). It is a view upheld by Lloyd Alexander (1986), who main­
tains that the "reference points" of science fiction "come from
genuine science, extended to its furthest and most imaginative
limits" (p. 164). With the appearance of Sandwriter in Great
Britain in 1985, Hughes' writing heralds a new direction. Al­
though classified as science fiction by Moore and Scanlan (1976,
p. 24), the book is more akin to fantasy in tone than it is to science fiction.

Fantasy has been variously described as paradoxical, imaginative, dreamlike, strange, fanciful, or visionary. For Alexander (1986) "fantasy is truth pretending to be a dream" (p. 165). To Tolkien (1965c), fantasy is the making or glimpsing of other worlds. It has been described as an awareness of the inexplicable existence of "magic" in our everyday world, a yearning for something wondrous, mysterious, supernatural, and perhaps, a truer vision of reality. While difficult to define, fantasy, like science fiction, can powerfully affect readers, as LeGuin (1982) attests:

[Fantasy] is a different approach to reality, an alternative technique for apprehending and coping with existence. It is not antirational, but pararational; not realistic, but surrealistic, a heightening of reality.... Fantasy is nearer to poetry, to mysticism, and to insanity than naturalistic fiction is.... A fantasy is a journey. It is a journey into the subconscious mind, just as psychoanalysis is. Like psychoanalysis, it can be dangerous; and it will change you (pp. 84-93).

In a particularly deft mesh of fantasy and realism, Hughes brings the conventions of the fairy tale of old into the story of Antia, the pampered princess of the twin continents of Komilant and Kamalant who is sent to be betrothed to Jodril, heir to the
island desert of Roshan. Antia determines to discover the age-old secret of this alien land and learn of the mysterious being known as Sandwriter. It is a story at once tender in mood and suspenseful, garnering many favourable reviews.

Antia is a heroine who must learn crucial lessons in order to survive, and it will be the intriguing desert environment which tests her mettle. In the process, contrasting perceptions of reality are examined, a theme echoed in other of Hughes' books. Antia's perceptions of Roshan, even before she has seen the country, are that it is "all desert and dirt and flies" (Hughes, 1985d, p. 8), "flies and dust and drought" (p. 14), unlike the magnificent forests and imposing mountains of home. Her first impression of Roshan does nothing to dispel this negative image. The town, "dumpy and mud-coloured, its houses struggling up the hill" (p. 19) strike her as provincial. Lady Sofi, her host, bows to her people, an act Antia finds inconceivable back home. Even the open carriage displeases because it is dusty. But gradually, after learning sad and hard lessons about trust and love, sheltered Antia comes to appreciate this harsh, unyielding environment. The contrasting values of the two countries make her rethink her own morality, learning that all is not "dryness and illusions" (p. 37).
Aiding Antia's changed, empathic view of Roshan is the ancient Sandwriter, a mystic, hereditary sibyl whose existence is a jealously guarded secret of the desert tribes. She is memorable, a being at one with the desert, imposing in her robe of rough-textured homespun. With deeply sunken eyes that see much, her myriad wrinkles, and the imperious hawklike curve of her nose, Sandwriter's silent presence possesses an aura of mystery, evoking awe. It is she who saves Antia from a terrible desert storm, and who treats the girl as a kindred spirit by helping her defeat the greedy tutor Eskoril. His strange, almost supernatural power of evil has tried to ensnare and manipulate Antia to gain access to the desert's black treasure, methli or oil. For naive Antia has unwittingly betrayed those whose values she has come to adopt by telling of this rich resource to Eskoril, for whom she had harboured an adolescent love. When Sandwriter calls forth the winds to thwart the villain, the awesome power of this mysterious woman is felt in the full strength of a sandstorm powerful enough to kill. The atmosphere of arid winds and choking dust is vividly portrayed, culminating in a suspenseful, powerfully dramatic climax. In a well developed love story, Antia accepts her prince in Sandwriter's presence. Then only does the old woman reveal that the child born of their union will become the next Sandwriter, custodian of the desert's secrets.
The fantasy writer is, in Tolkien's (1965c) world a "sub-creator":

He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter.... Anyone inheriting the fantastic device of human language can say the green sun...
To make a Secondary World inside which the green sun will be credible, commanding Secondary Belief, will probably require labour and thought, and will demand a special skill, a kind of elvish craft (pp. 37-49).

Hughes breaks ties with the ordinary world to create her Secondary World, generating a mythology consistent within itself. The background of contrasted landscapes and an insightful portrait of the people of the two lands provides a unifying element. Descriptions of the palace courtyard, the primitive architecture of Roshan, the dark caverns, the recessed pool where the oil is to be located and, above all, the tense moods of the desert itself, with the limitless sky of a thousand million stars burning, its high winds and constantly shifting sands, become integral to the story which moves at a rapid pace like the swift kroklyns, desert creatures used for riding. Sandwriter's tale of how Roshan came into being reverberates with a mythic resonance, heightening the reality of this secondary universe.

Morris (1973), in his essay "Fantasy in a Mythless Age", writes:
A journey taken in the realm of fantasy is taken at one's peril. Along the way questions will be asked which have no easy answer. But to take that journey is to rediscover the self related to the world in a deeply meaningful though somewhat discomforting way (pp. 85-96).

Antia's journey from the rich twin continents to Roshan is the journey into self, for she learns the pain of Eskoril's betrayal, of her own blinded vision. But, in the larger context - which is wisely not spelled out--there is for the reader another journey, one involving a serious, reflective presentation of the moral dangers to a country's people when a rich resource such as oil is discovered. As an issue it is as relevant to our world as it is to the worlds Antia inhabits, moving one reviewer to suggest that "of all Monica Hughes' invented worlds this one may well be the most potent and the most stirring so far" (Growing Point, 1985, p. 4471).

Summary

Hughes has produced a literature of ideas in action that avoids didacticism. In her novels and short stories whose readership would range from the early primary grades to the young adolescent, she reiterates themes pursued in earlier works, such as differing perceptions of reality, a concern for ecology, the misuse of technology, and the search for self, among others. But she also invests these tales with imaginative flair and kindliness,
using telepathy to suggest that humans must move to a more empathic awareness of others as it means the survival of the human race. Survival involves reaching beyond insular, inflexible, isolated confines to risk, to challenge, to dare. The underlying notion is that one must not lose the magic, the capacity to dream. Her literary assurance, which produces exciting works, is found in such devices as flashback, telepathic sequences, in dream-like, episodic structures which enliven plot, in her beguiling heroes and heroines, and in images of hope. As befits a writer who constantly explores varied horizons, Hughes' writing has moved in new directions, as exemplified by the fantasy, *Sandwriter*. 
CHAPTER SIX
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM

One aspect of this study has been to chart Hughes' progress as a writer of fine literature that can be read and appreciated while another purpose is to show how aptly Hughes' works fit the developmental level of the adolescent. A third thrust is to suggest strategies by which educators may implement her works in the middle school. Hughes' books, eminently suited to this level, can engage the middle school age student, who is in the crucial process of physical and emotional maturation. Faced with the dilemma of having one foot in the world of the adult and the other in the world of the child, the adolescent balances precariously. He longs for the freedom associated with being a grown-up, yet is reluctant to sever connections with childhood and accept the responsibilities that are a part of such freedom. His thought, now more complex, allows for an evaluation of books in a discerning manner. Educators aware of the developmental aspects of adolescence can help create a warm, inviting milieu in which Hughes' books may flourish, for her stories are absorbing, exciting, and well-written.

Elaine Moss (1986) in her book *Part of the Pattern* has posed a question and provided a response: "What do teenagers read? The
answer ... is pretty short: everything, or almost nothing" (p. 31). Why then, one might ask, is there a seeming disparity between those who read voraciously and the disinterest on the part of many who reject "'kids' stuff' ... in favour of mod gear and a pop culture in which books play no part"? (p. 31). Moss addresses this issue by reminding us that teenagers:

... lack stories, so they attempt to satisfy their hunger by watching television, unaware that their true need is not just for the story but for an exploration of the emotions which are the mainspring of the action. Only books can give these young people the opportunity to test their own feelings and new experiences against those of a fictional character, privately and at a moment chosen for themselves.

But what can they read, these youngsters who have been taught by society to expect instant entertainment? The classics are too difficult, many modern novels are too advanced in technique, the story in the teenage weekly too synthetic to fulfill any real function. They need books which are basically adult and serious, which throw some light upon the human situation and which tell a story vividly, briefly and in some depth (pp. 31-32).

The School Council Report in Britain found that teenagers around thirteen plus drifted away from book reading because at this stage, books of childhood did not appeal, yet they had not discovered adult fiction (Thompson, 1981b, p. 121). "Clearly a gap exists that adolescent fiction could usefully bridge" (p. 121) maintains Thompson. Since much of Hughes' writings mirror the
middle school age child's world, her books can serve as bridges to fuller understanding of more complicated literary works. As such, this chapter will focus on the developmental portrait of the middle school child as a reader and the function of the educator in nurturing a love of literature. Strategies for including Hughes' books in the curriculum will be suggested to develop students' critical acumen in reading her writings. Such activities are designed to enrich the imaginative inner world of the adolescent.

A Developmental Portrait of the Middle School Child

Over the years terms used to refer to literature read by young people of junior and senior high school age have changed. A current term is "young adult literature", used by Nilsen and Donelson (1985), which includes "anything that readers between the ages of twelve and twenty choose to read" (p. 9). The rationale for the broad age range was the desire to include teachers and librarians with readers in middle schools or junior high schools and those youths who had graduated from high school but had not yet discovered adult literature.

The middle school age learners who will encounter "young adult literature" are between the ages of eleven to fourteen. For them, adolescence is beset by contradictions. Urged to behave
and think in a mature manner, they learn that legal and social
restraints discourage or prevent their enjoyment of adult
pleasures and privileges until they reach a prescribed age.
Physical, emotional, and intellectual changes prove tumultuous.
This is a period of storm and stress or "sturm and drang" (Hall,
1904), of alternating cycles of conflict and calm (Gesell, Ilg &
Ames, 1956), of a crisis of identity (Erikson, 1968). As
Kemmerling (1985) tells, "no other segment of the population is
subject to such thorough metamorphoses over a comparatively brief
span of years, or such exquisite sensitivity to the myriad social
factors intersecting their lives" (p. 115).

Physical growth is accelerated which results in restlessness,
lack of co-ordination, or fatigue. The most important physio-
logical change, and the one which marks the onset of adolescence,
is the maturing of the sexual functions. In biological terms the
adolescent attains sexual maturity and gradually acquires adult
physical characteristics and stature. These changes in physical
appearance may have a psychological impact resulting in self-
consciousness and a difficulty in accepting a new image of the
body. This is the time when sexual attraction becomes a
dominant force.

Havighurst (1972) has described this transitional period
between childhood and adulthood in a series of developmental
tasks that adolescents must fulfill in order to become adults. These tasks call for the achievement of a degree of competence in emotional, intellectual, social, and moral areas. Movement is away from solitary pursuits to a preoccupation with social activities and group participation. For boys the "gang age" (p. 45) is more prominent than it is for girls. The school becomes their "social laboratory" where they create "on a small scale the society of their elders" (p. 45). They learn to work with others for a common purpose, disregarding personal feelings.

The peer group provides the medium in which young people explore their own identity and a life style different from the dominant culture of their parents. Peer approval is a powerful influence evidenced in the slavish adherence to the dress, language, and behaviour cultivated by teenagers. The peer group confers status and a sense of belonging which helps determine self-image but can have negative or positive outcomes. Some young people may pursue unsuitable activities or friendships that limit their independence to think or act freely.

But while this conformity seems limited to the externals, in their inner life they are "sometimes individualistic to an extreme" (Havighurst, 1972, p. 46). Introspective, they begin an examination of self which LeFrancois (1980) identifies as "the nebulous essence of an individual" (p. 435). It is this self
awareness, the search for identity, which is important to the development of an adolescent, for it is where a workable meaning of the world and his place in it are formed (Elkind, 1974, p. 165).

Adolescents experience an ambivalence in their desires (Havighurst, 1972, p. 55). They want to grow up to be independent, yet the adult world, frightening and complicated, causes them to wish for the secure haven of parental protection. They examine critically the reigning ideology of adults, yet as idealists themselves they are unable to accept compromise or extenuating circumstances, frequently finding it wanting. Disillusioned, they rebel at parental authority using schools as places to exert independence.

Rebellion may alternate with a need for emotional support and a sense of belonging. If criticized, however, adolescents feel intensely discouraged, inadequate, and filled with self-doubt. There is a fear of isolation and rejection. It is an unstable period characterized by rapid mood swings from elation to depression.

The cognitive dimension is also subject to change. Moral development, as initially defined by Piaget (1965) and later refined by Kohlberg (1981), represents not only increasing knowledge of cultural values but also the transformations that occur in a
person's structure of thought. Morality in childhood is ego-centric. Children, Kohlberg claims, start by seeing rules as dependent upon power and external compulsion, then as an instrument to rewards. With adolescence the orientation becomes socio-centric in which the expectations of others are considered first. The higher stages of moral behaviour represents a move away from a belief of set definitions of right and wrong towards the establishment of a personal code of principles against which laws are evaluated. Adolescents "may go through a period of ethical relativism" (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977, p. 57) during which time the premises of any moral system is questioned. Not all adolescents, nor all adults, achieve Kohlberg's highest level of moral reasoning. But since adolescents have the psychological capacity to progress to higher, more abstract and ethical stages of moral reasoning, where objective appraisal of different moral claims can be made, "the aim of education ought to be the personal development of students toward more complex ways of reasoning" (p. 55).

Intellectually, Piaget theorized, the adolescent differs from the child in being able to move into the realm of the hypothetical, to compare and assess the possibilities inherent in a situation, and to manipulate abstract propositions without reference to the concrete and actual (Ginsburg & Opper, 1969, pp. 181-206).
McCandless and Coop (1979) describe this stage as an ability to "adopt several different viewpoints for considering a given act" so that the adolescent gains "possession of all the powers of IF" (p. 160). This flexibility of thought is especially useful when reading imaginative literature where readers are able to make inferences about the work and its parts. Understanding language uses, structure, point-of-view, and making connections between and among works and judging their merits becomes constructive and insightful (Purves & Monson, 1984, pp. 142-143).

Piaget's notion of cognitive growth during this period has been challenged by researchers who believe that there is a brain growth spurt between the ages ten and twelve followed by "slow brain growth periods" or plateaus from twelve to fourteen "corresponding roughly with grades seven and eight" (Epstein & Toepfer, 1978, p. 657). The implied aspect of this hypothesis would be that abstract and formal evaluations of literature should not be taught. But, as Arnold (1982) suggests, a simple developmental perspective is not adequate (pp. 453-454). He cautions against assumptions that adolescents are in any fixed stage of cognitive growth, a view noted by Purves and Monson (1984, pp. 143-144). "Variability" is stressed as "the chief characteristic of cognitive development in early adolescence" (Arnold, 1982, p. 454).
Educators should therefore employ strategies that challenge but do not defeat or intimidate.

Adolescence, as has been noted, is typically a time of searching, of vacillating between dependence and independence, childhood and adulthood, "between bubble gum and bourbon" (Hunt, 1986, p. 109), a time of trying to establish identity, of forming attitudes and values. The way an adolescent resolves or constructs the present determines his adult stance towards life generally. The emergence of the middle school movement was in response to the inadequacies of school systems which had not addressed the unique needs of early adolescents. In a speech to the Saskatchewan Middle Years Association, John Lounsbury, editor of the Middle School Journal, expressed his concern that educators should refrain from such negative attitudes as ignoring this most difficult, misunderstood, and intense period in life. Comparing the young adolescent to a frog waiting to be turned into a prince by the kiss of a maiden, he suggests the early adolescent needs love and understanding - or "frog-kissing" - in order for this magical transformation to happen (Gabruch, 1985, p. A-12). As educators, he believes "'our job is not to nurture existing ability but to develop potential ability'" (p. A-12). Arnold (1982) would concur, adding that the cognitive domain be balanced with equivalent opportunities in the emotional and social spheres.
The Child as Critic

Van der Loeff (1976) has written:

For children, to live is to discover. To discover means to find out about things vaguely known or completely new. They will discover new opinions and possibilities, new values and new doubts. Perhaps surprises and doubts - even anguish and terror - are the essence of life: we cannot withhold them from our children ...

It is not by withholding things from children that we help them. We arm children by helping them build up critical minds; we can help them to develop the scope of their imaginations (p. 28).

The building of critical appraisal of literature must first be seen in the light of the developmental aspect of the young adolescent. Some studies have looked at the response of students in their engagement with literature.

Norma Schlager (1978) claims that the question of what children read has taken precedence over the question why they choose to read some books rather than others. Their choices, she believes, are a direct influence of their developmental stage. Children usually cannot verbalize why they choose a certain book, but, Schlager says "books that reflect the child's perception of the world are the books children clamor for" (p. 137). She compiled the behavioral characteristics of middle childhood (ages seven to twelve) based, in the main, on the developmental theories
of Piaget and Erikson. She rank-ordered Newbery award books by the frequency of their circulation over a three year period. The five most circulated and five least circulated were analyzed to determine what correlation, if any, could be found between the books widely read and the characteristics exhibited in middle childhood, which was the intended readership. It was discovered that a book like Island of the Blue Dolphins by O'Dell (1970), the most circulated book in the survey, exhibited, to a highly complex degree, the developmental features of the middle childhood reader. Karana, in her struggles to survive alone on the island, reflected the young adolescent's self-awareness and search for independence. Shannon's (1934) Dobry, by contrast, was the least read, for though well-written, it did not reflect the young adolescent's developmental perspective.

Protherough (1983) examined responses made by British children to stories which they had heard. He contends that "there are three broad stages of development in evaluation, marked off from each other by the relationship that is envisaged between reader and text" (p. 7). The most elementary stage, typical of eleven or twelve-year-olds, were superficial responses: "It was good", or "I enjoyed it because it was funny", or "It's about a girl" (pp. 7-8). At the second level, around twelve to thirteen, the judgments were more incisive. Reactions to books become more
personal: "I liked the story because it made me tense and excited" (p. 8). It is here that "children sometimes seem to imagine that novels or stories could be different from the way they are: they would be better if they ended in another way, or omitted parts, or if the characters were different" (p. 9). At the third level, from thirteen onwards, students were concerned about finding objective evaluations for their literary judgments. They sought reasons that others would understand and were more sophisticated in expressing themselves. For Protherough, "this is the key stage at which students learn (or not) that reading in a certain way, choosing to concentrate on a particular aspect of the text, is to become a critic" (p. 10). Learning to be a critic is a gradual process, as Protherough's work demonstrates.

In his book The Child's Concept of Story: Ages Two to Seventeen Applebee (1978) elaborated on this interaction with how a story means by placing it within the broader perspective of language usage. He also explored some of the relationships of these uses to general processes of mind. The young adolescent assumes the spectator's role toward literature, an aspect initially explored by D.W. Harding and James Britton (Pradl, 1982, pp. 46-51). "The characteristic of analysis is that a work is treated in terms of 'how it works': its mechanics, the logic of its structure, its images and symbols" (Applebee, 1978, pp. 108-109).
The broader theme or message implied in a work is the final stage of literary judgment. Schlager, Protherough, and Applebee confirm the developmental responses of children toward literature, which have implications for the young adolescent as critic. Students at the middle school level learn from experience the kinds of reading they have to give to different texts, for as Protherough (1983) explains, "the development of readers is associated with the ability to read and respond in a variety of ways" (p. 12).

To be a critic of literature, to look at it through informed eyes, is to have developed the educated imagination (Frye, 1963, p. 44). Frye elaborates:

> The critic's function is to interpret every work of literature in the light of all the literature he knows, to keep constantly struggling to understand what literature as a whole is about. Literature as a whole is not an aggregate of exhibits with red and blue ribbons attached to them, like a cat show, but the range of articulate human imagination as it extends from the height of imaginative hell. Literature is a human apocalypse, man's revelation to man, and criticism is not a body of adjudications, but the awareness of that revelation, the last judgment of mankind (p. 44).

But, as Vandergrift (1980) so rightly asserts, too often it is assumed that literary criticism is the especial province of those who are considered more sophisticated, mature readers (p. 12). She contends that if one accepts the premise that "literary
criticism is a cumulative developmental process that grows with an individual's continued search for that which is most meaningful and most valuable and most enjoyable to him, then all those who read or hear stories must be critics" (p. 12). That stance would include the young as critics, whether they be in the pre-literate stage when they react to books (Crago & Crago, 1983), first or second grade (Kiefer, 1982), or middle school age students. But it must be remembered that to develop critical abilities there must also be a pleasurable encounter with literature. "Involvement and personal reaction always come before reasoned judgment in the development of critical abilities, and every child should be given ample time to dwell and wonder at that involvement" (Vandergrift, 1980, p. 13). It must be reading with enjoyment. As Britton reiterates: "That a student should read more books with satisfaction may be set down as one objective; as a second, he should read books with more satisfaction" (Pradl, 1982, p. 35). That is not to deny the encouragement of the improved response, the developed sense of form. However, the sense of literary form can only be nurtured from "the legacy of past satisfactions" (p. 108).
The Educator's Role in Nurturing Discerning Readers

in a "Response-Centered" Literature Environment

The transactive response to literature maintains that the reading of works is not simply the communication of a message to a passive receiver; the transaction is an active, internal involvement in which the reader recreates the text and confers meaning on the work. Research in response to literature is a field of inquiry which has proliferated in the last few years, signifying the import of this area of endeavour. Fuelled by Rosenblatt's (1938/1983, 1978, 1985) ideas of the reader as crucial to the construction of a literary experience, researchers like Agee (1983), Beach (1983, 1985), Benton (1983a, 1983b), Cullinan, Harwood, Galda (1983), Purves (1985), Sims (1983), Tabbert (1983), and Webb (1985) are among those who have either propounded theories or undertaken research in response to literature.

If the approaches to literature for the middle school child is toward an illumination of text through exploration, the teacher becomes the vital connection in promoting an environment in which the imaginative possibilities are affirmed:

Those who work with children would be wise to remember that reading is basically a very private affair; nothing we can teach will have the impact of the reader's personal intuition and apprehension. That is not to say, however, that a child should be allowed
to stop at that point. A sympathetic adult can help him to enter intuitively into a work of art, to celebrate that work, to sharpen his intuition, and finally to expand his awareness, refine his discriminations, and widen and deepen his perceptions. In this way, the child moves toward genuine literary criticism (Vandergrift, 1980, pp. 13-14).

An early study by Squire (1964) deemed that adolescent readers clearly required assistance in learning to interpret literature (p. 54). But if the teacher is to cultivate response, assisting students in sharpening their literary perceptions and allowing them to appreciate more fully the uniqueness both of the individual stories and of themselves as readers, account should be taken of their developmental needs and interests (Pillar, 1983, p. 46). In the teaching of literature the student's affective response which follows a developmental path is integral to his understanding of the work:

In its ideal form, comprehension of a literary response should involve the response of a whole, organized person; and it should be consistent with a framework created, first, by an intellectual grasp of the work, its parts, and its principles or organization, and second, by knowledge of the world the work refers to, its connection with the student's own world and experience, and its relation to other works (Harding, 1977, pp. 388-389).

"A toleration of the selective or superficial response may really be a way in" (p. 391) to meeting the needs of children who do not
find the modern literary classics appealing. The recognition of the "response implicit in an emphasis that looks odd or hostile is an important action of the teacher's sensibility" (p. 391), an acknowledgement of the transitional stage between childhood and adulthood where reading interests are manifold and diverse. Since "response is a word that reminds the teacher that the experience of art is a thing of our own making, an activity in which we are our own interpretative artists," (p. 391) encouragement, not frowns, should be part of these initial literary encounters in the middle grade classroom.

It is incumbent on adults who are concerned with children's reading not simply to select and counsel wisely, but also to appreciate the reading habit itself. To read avidly, to see the connections between children's and adult literature, is to possess the educated imagination. For the teacher is then able to tap children's sense of wonder by helping them to discover the world through literary eyes:

The beginnings of a specialized vocabulary for talking about books and new strategies for comparing and evaluating seem to come largely from the teacher's influence within the community of readers. Once a teacher emphasizes an aspect of a book, what she has touched echoes through the year. The teacher's calling attention to multiple interpretations of a title, such as Paterson's Bridge to Terabithia (1977), allowed children to consider the title as metaphor (Hickman & Hepler, 1982, p. 282).
But the librarian and the principal should not be overlooked, for their contributions to the establishment of a "response-centered" milieu are of significance (Squire, 1985, p. 297). In recent years, the librarian has begun to play a more decisive role in co-operative programme planning and in co-operative teaching activities with classroom teachers. A leading proponent of this view is Ken Haycock (1984a, 1984b). The Ontario Ministry of Education (1982) publication, appropriately titled Partners in Action: The School Library Resource Centre in the School Curriculum advocates that teaching and learning be based on a process of continual interaction amongst teachers, librarians, and learners. Maintains Barton (1977): "The way forward can never be working in isolation" (p. 362). Only "in collaboration with others who are concerned with the needs of children and young people" can the child be helped "in his search for the private world of reading for pleasure" (p. 362). The school librarian, can, in an insightful manner, offer important resources for a programme in literature which strengthens imaginative visions.

The principal is a key person in the development of working partnerships among staff members and in determining the free access of children to books. As an administrator responsible for the overall operation of the school and its programme, he or she can summon the requisite interpersonal skills and management necessary for
developing the central role that library resources have in bringing children and books together. "With an attitude of enthusiastic support for the establishment of the partnership and respect for the participants, the principal can establish a climate in the school for co-operation, experimentation, and growth" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1982, p. 12). Obviously, where books are much in evidence the nurturing of student responses to literature flourishes. A principal who promotes a warm, conducive atmosphere, allowing response to literature to occur, is one who sees that humans are those "whose personal meanings are shaped through interactions, both actual and imaginative, with the meanings of others" (Vandergrift, 1980, p. 273).

Literary response does not arise in a vacuum, nor are its results, that of the middle school child as discerning reader, immediately observed. "In the optimum situation, the teacher is seen as one who directs, or at least leads, a process by which students achieve, within the limits set by their different abilities and funded experience, feeling comprehensions of various works of literary art" (Harding, 1977, pp. 389-390). This process is seen as "a continuing one" (p. 390) under the teacher's direction. What is certain is that the educator is instrumental in widening and enriching the continuous and perceptive literary
explorations with text. Says Blishen (1976) of teachers of literature:

And this, I believe, is really fundamentally our task: to become as sensitive as possible to the nature of human beings, and in our case especially young human beings. I believe that this is what, at heart, it is all about: it is about simply delighting in the existence of literature and using the energies that arise out of that delight in a natural way....

The nature of literature is such that teachers' treatment of it in schools will succeed only if the treatment reflects some sense of, as it were, a delicate, shielded mystery. For that, when the talking is done and all the questions are asked, is the inner character of literary creation itself. Ultimately what we have to do is to bring literature and children together (pp. 243-244).

It must be through "the exhibition in ourselves, the teachers, of what a true reader is - an excited person, whose responses to books are many and varied and complicated" (p. 245) that literary exploration with students becomes a delightful reality.

A Rationale for Including Hughes' Works in the Middle School Literature Programme

Skeptics who summarily dismiss young adult literature criticize the content, the brevity of the works, and charge that they cater to a teenage audience readership who more readily watch television than burrow their noses in books. What purpose they cry, is there in publishing for this market? Moss (1986) retorts:
"But publishing for the ordinary young teenager and for the reluctant teenager is our business.... Today's teenagers know it all - superficially. Are we not therefore right to explore in some depth- in the course of a story for them, the topics glibly tossed over in celluloid or on the box?" (p. 118). Hughes' works invite opportunities for an aesthetic, yet meaningful exploration, for she respects her youthful audience who seek answers to varied questions.

In mirroring the developmental view of the young adolescent world, Hughes has achieved what Schlager (1978) believes such books do, which is to have main characters who reflect the complex psychological and emotional aspects of their readers. The primary developmental task of adolescence, the emergence of identity, is witnessed in Hughes' characters, each of whom is in search of self. Mike Rankin, realizing he is not invincible, is nevertheless aware of the need to establish himself as independent. At heart, the hunt is Mike's insistent search for himself in the lonely elements of the wilderness, unhampered by the intrusiveness of hospitals or his comfortable urban life. What he finds in the dark out there is his answer to the darkness within. There is Olwen's expanding consciousness to the nature and possibilities of human relationships, Tom Lightfoot's discovery that he is his own person, and Benjamin's knowledge that he can effect a salutary change in his
Hutterite Bruderhof. In Hughes' books, the varieties of alienation experienced by immigrants to new worlds and the importance of adaptation to hostile environments for survival reflect the middle grade students' experiences, their loneliness and sense of adventure and journey toward self-maturation.

As Havighurst (1972) has shown, altruism is a feature of the adolescent. Jody's journey to the Sacred Cave brings him knowledge, patience, and the willingness to do heroic deeds without reward or acknowledgement. Caro loses her eyesight but the greater good has been achieved. Antia must embark on a new life in a stranger, harsher world than her own because her presence will be advantageous for that community. None of these benefits is accomplished without pain and self sacrifice. Such examples are also illustrative of the moral and ethical precepts that Kohlberg (1981) espouses and which adolescents can address through Hughes' writings.

For an adolescent, possibility dominates reality. Confronted with a scientific problem, he begins not by observing the empirical results, but by thinking of the possibilities inherent in the situation. What actually occurs in a situation, he knows, is only one of a number of possible alternatives. That is the reason Hughes' science fiction is especially worthwhile for young people. As Hughes (1982g) herself has said of this genre:
I think Science Fiction is very, very good for young people - particularly today, when they are facing so many difficult choices in life, and we don't know what kind of choices in their future. Becoming familiar with Science Fiction, I think, helps us reach out fearlessly into that many-branched future and take control, perhaps, of our destiny. It teaches us to ask questions: "What if?" "And then what?" And it teaches us to find answers (p. 20).

Toffler's (1980) powerful declaration that "a new civilization is emerging in our lives, and blind men everywhere are trying to suppress it" (p. 25) has serious implications for our society. In view of that "explosive fact," students need to "[attune] their lives to the rhythms of tomorrow" rather than being "terrified of the future" by attempting a "futile flight into the past" (p. 25). Hughes' science fiction allows students, for whom flexibility of thought is a characteristic, to take into account all the possible combinations of eventualities and test them. With the ability to think speculatively comes the potential to consider important issues in the novels, like the over-reliance on technology, the disastrous effects of pollution, the encroachment of the modern world that infringes on the rights of minority groups who seek to live in harmony with nature. Middle grade students need to examine alternatives that would address such pressing issues. Flexibility implies the viewing of concerns from different perspectives and evolving beneficial solutions for mankind. If
adolescents are to see "beneath the clutter and jangle of seemingly senseless events" (p. 17) and look forward to a "potentially hopeful pattern" (p. 17) for our world, they must be challenged. Hughes' science fiction provides a significant context for students to become involved in complex considerations.

It has been suggested that the future leaders of society are those who do not take an "ostrich-like view", but are creative and constructive in response to challenges (Bogue, 1985, p. 21). Faced with odds, Hughes' characters seek diverse methods of addressing problems. Kepler Masterman recognizes that the central conflict, that of exploitation of workers by conglomerates, cannot be resolved by the violent, terrorist tactics of the gillmen, nor by the interminable legal wranglings pursued by men like his father. Another, more reasoned, approach has to be undertaken by him. When the gauntlet is thrown, Tomi rises to the challenge of making a passive people who have lost their capacity to dream and wonder take control of their own destinies. The solutions are not effected through rigid means but through the imaginative powers of mind.

Each of Hughes' heroes or heroines possesses qualities that Bogue (1985) believes make an effective leader, such as "an active curiosity, a spirit of inquiry, a touch of irreverence, a compulsive use of that wonderful little word 'why'" (p. 15). But more importantly, they have a hope, the kind of optimism that comes
about through the informed power of action, not passivity, about rectifying the world's ills. Bogue cites Dubos, who states that "optimism is a creative philosophical attitude, because it encourages taking advantages of personal and social crises for the development of novel and more sensible ways of life" (p. 21). In Hughes' stories there is optimism, but it is not an exaggerated, hollow optimism, for these characters endure hardship, alienation, and pain. Middle school children could identify with these characters and their travails, for their own fears and aspirations are also those of their storybook counterparts.

Myers (1978) strongly advocates the inclusion of science fiction in classrooms because of the genre's emphasis on strong, action-filled plots, suspense, and speed, its presentation of broad themes like the merits of different types of social organization, exploitation in unfamiliar contexts, and poverty, all aspects which are discussed in his world affairs classes. But to include Hughes' science fiction, and indeed, her other works, only as part of a middle school social studies programme, while admirable, would be to detract from the full literary experience she offers. Discussion of "new opinions and possibilities, new values and new doubts" (Van der Loeff, 1976, p. 28) is fine, but the stories themselves allow for the capacity to wonder, to develop discerning literary minds at this age level. As Paterson (1981) says: "Don't we want for
[students] the life and growth and refreshment that only the rich fullness of our language can give?" (p. 17).

**Suggestions for Extending Encounters with Hughes' Works**

In the classroom experience the chief concern should be for extending the students' acquaintance with and response to Hughes' writings:

When children work with books in ways that are meaningful to them - through art or music activities, drama, talk, writing, or crafts, there is more at stake than better cognitive understanding about literature. Activities that extend literature encourage greater personal satisfaction with books by providing an outlet and encouragement for personal response. To interpret a book is to know it, to make it a memorable experience (Huck, Hepler, & Hickman, 1987, p. 678).

a) **Reading Aloud**

It has been demonstrated that reading aloud to children improves their attitudes towards books and reading (Butler, 1980; Clay, 1979; Lamme, 1984). But while writers and researchers have recommended to parents and teachers that they share literature with the very young, it seems this advice is not necessarily heeded by those who work with students in the middle grades and higher (Moss, 1986, p. 170; Vandergrift, 1980, p. 196; Oppenheim & Brenna, 1986, p. 219).

Yolen's (1981) perceptive observation that "stories lean on stories, art on art" (p. 15) would suggest that reading aloud is
not merely a pleasant indulgence but a serious obligation, for stories not only preserve and transmit our cultural heritage but are an expression of our very existence. In hearing Hughes' books read aloud, students may discern within their broader context surprising shadows of earlier tales. Devious Michael Joseph Flynn is both Loki and Raven the Trickster, Sandwriter is the archetypal wise old woman of myth, Arc One has its roots in the biblical tale of Noah.

Not all of Hughes' stories lend themselves well to being read aloud. *Hunter in the Dark, Blaine's Way* and *Beyond the Dark River* are suited to small group discussions or individual reading because they rely less on fast-paced action and dialogue for their development. The *Isis* trilogy, *The Tomorrow City*, and *Space Trap*, dramatic in their structure because of the use of small, telling climaxes leading to the final denouement, are more appropriate for reading aloud. Hughes' short tales "The Singing Float" and "The Iron-Barred Door" also lend themselves well to this activity.

b) Drama

Increasing dissatisfaction with prescriptive teaching models has seen the emergence of drama as a "powerful mode of learning through which students are encouraged to gain mastery over their own thinking" (Verriour, 1985, p. 150). For Bolton (1985), drama
is seen as a "collective experience, celebrating, or commenting, not on how we are different from each other, but on what we share, on what ways we are alike.... Drama is not self-expression; it is a form of group symbolism seeking universal, not individual truths" (p. 154). If drama is a social rather than a solitary activity, concerned with engagement outside of oneself, it is of great significance for the middle grade learner for whom dramatization of Hughes' books becomes not only a liberating act of the imagination but a way of "objectifying one's own private meanings" (Bolton, 1984, p. 154).

Drama, "the act of crossing into the world of story" (Haine, 1985, p. 187), becomes a reframing in that the knowledge students have is placed in a new context. The fictional worlds created, whether they be on Isis, Roshan, the twin continents of Komilant and Kamalant, Conshelf Ten, or the Swan Hills of Alberta, possess an inner logic, because the roles adopted, though close to their own, allow for detachment. Within the safety of the pretence, concepts already held may be reevaluated, modified, reshaped, and realigned (Bolton, 1985, p. 154). In drama then, the heart of Hughes' stories may be discovered through their images (Haine, 1985, p. 187).

Booth (1985) demonstrates the close link between drama and reading. Rather than being "satisfied with immediate, simplistic solutions," drama allows for exploration, "peeling away the layers
that cloud meaning," thereby assisting in developing "the 'what if' element that must be brought to print if true reading is to occur" (p. 193). In journeying inside Hughes' books, students can pause, linger over images, or move forward and backward to make meaning happen.

But the dramatic activities must be placed in a meaningful, embedded context. As Stewig (1973) writes, to engage the imagination involves "going beyond the basic material" to "create other episodes which could occur before, during, and after the basic story" (pp. 9-10). Some basic episodes within the stories which could be enacted are Olwen's first encounter with the earth inhabitants in *Keeper of the Isis Light*, Jody N'Komo's meeting with the Shining One and Olwen in *The Guardian of Isis*, the court scene in which Kepler is tried in *Crisis on Conshelf Ten*, the events leading to the slave revolt in *Devil on My Back*, the robbery in progress in *The Ghost Dance Caper*, or the dangerous political rescue operation in *The Dream Catcher*. But, to implement Stewig's idea of stretching minds, 'what if' possibilities should be included. One such activity could be an improvisation in which Mike in *Hunter in the Dark* confronts his parents with the knowledge of his fatal illness before he leaves for his hunting trip. Master Bix forcing Liza to return to the City in *Ring-Rise Ring-Set*, Blaine being reunited with his mother after several years in *Blaine's Way*, or Ruth and Luke
finding other Arks and linking up with them in The Dream Catcher, are other possibilities for improvisation which extend the texts.

Education is the process of helping individuals find essential meanings in life. Through drama, there is the possibility of a synthesis of language, thought, and feeling which can enrich the symbolic inner world of the individual, heighten awareness and understanding of the actual, and develop confidence and competence in operating within it (O'Neil & Lambert, 1982). Dramatizing Hughes' tales is one way the middle school child may discover the heart of the story.

c) Writing

Drama acts as a powerful pre-writing activity, providing a meaningful context in which writing can take place (Tarlington, 1985, p. 199). Common elements to drama and writing are collecting data, making choices, focusing and clarifying images, an awareness of senses and feelings, use of appropriate diction, organizing, revising, and editing (Wagner, 1985, p. 172). Some written activities which might occur as an outgrowth of drama could be a charter of rights for Moon colonists, Blaine's correspondence with his mother, who lives in a different city, or the child Mark's reactions to seeing Daughter-of-She-Who-Came-After, since this is his first contact with a human other than his grandparents.
That literature is central to a writing programme has been noted by Frank Smith (1982, p. 177). This connection between reading and writing has also been acknowledged in *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading* (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1984, p. 79) and by Britton who describes them as "complementary processes" (p. 100) that are required because in written language we can take the stories, interpret them in the light of our past experience, and make for a representation of the world that is a new reality (Pradl, 1982, pp. 99-100). To do so students must take on the role of spectator, which arises out of necessity because:

we need to go back and come to terms with undigested experience. But we also need to take it up for fun and pleasure - because we never cease to long for more lives than the one we've got. We've only got one life as participants. As spectators, countless lives are open to us....

... In the spectator role we show a concern for the total world picture, a concern for the total context into which every experience has to be fitted (p. 105).

To allow for the creation of this world picture means that opportunities to experience a range of writing modes should be provided. Moffett and Wagner (1983) promote such endeavours, suggesting this holistic approach is the key to language learning, making for a wider frame of reference. Such activities as reporting
on the events of the gillmen in their fight against Topside, the
death of Olwen's beloved pet Hobbitt, or the impending marriage of
Antia and Jodril, could be written in newspaper-article format.
Adopting the point-of-view of other characters allows for an entry
into their experiences and emotions. For example, correspondence
between the gillmen and Hilary to Kepler in which he is kept
abreast of events regarding their life after negotiations with
Topside, letters to Paula Popowich from friends in Toronto, Ann's
letter to Kepler during his undersea residency, and Mike's notes to
David, Moira, and Jody from the far reaches of space are all
possibilities of how writing would enhance participation in the
lives of others. Diaries are another source of written work.
Olwen's diary entry for the night of her tenth birthday, Ruth's
exploration of her feelings of alienation, Liza's daily reflections
within the City confines and later with the Ekoes, and Tomi's journey­
ing into the wilderness are examples of writing in a personal mode.

There are other ways of responding to a book. Those who prefer
not to react in public to Hunter in the Dark may do so privately in
a journal. Literary surveys in which students decide which of
Hughes' books they prefer could be collected and the data presented
in bar and pie graphs, averages, and percentiles, all attractively
displayed. Reports and surveys of the planet Isis, records of its
weather patterns, or contrasting the climate of Komilant and Kamalant with that of Roshan would be worthwhile for students who find the demands of writing a diary or journal too complicated a task. Others might compose songs to entertain those slaves who have escaped from Arc One or stories to regale the Isis settlers. Letters to the author reflecting their own perceptions of her books would be welcomed rather than "form" letters which are wooden in tone. These could be forwarded to the author in a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

When assignments follow lessons in which the writing is seen as a natural outgrowth of literary study, where contexts are created that foster the enriched understanding of Hughes' stories, not only is there a sensitivity to the conventions of the various forms created, but also, students begin to realize that writing is not an onerous task. By providing a variety of choices, written work performs the communicative function in a fulfilling, enjoyable manner.

d) Arts and Media

Eisner (1978) determines that "reading is not only a generic human activity designed to meet man's biological needs to know, but that it is an artistic activity as well ... concerned with the creation of meaning through the creation of form" (p. 27). The scope offered by Hughes' writings extends to artistic endeavors that
may be pursued by students in order to create meaning.

Murals which illustrate Antia's voyage from the twin continents of Kamalant and Komilant to Roshan, the travels of the children to the Klondike, or Kepler's expedition to the dark side of the moon could depict the theme of 'journey' that underlies these works in a physical format. Murals of favorite or less favoured characters or events in one story could be collaboratively accomplished. Individuals may prefer to illustrate characters like Olwen, the Stranger in "Zone of Silence", or scenes like the meeting of Elaine and Chris with Starchild in "Lights Over Loon Lake."

Designing book jackets to promote *Space Trap, Beckoning Lights, The Tomorrow City*, or other of Hughes' works requires that students make an assessment of each story's predominant features and selection of the elements which would attract potential readers without revealing the entire tale.

Slides, whether handmade or photographed from student prepared illustrations, become another avenue of visualizing the action of the tales. Key scenes, carefully selected, may advertise the novels in the manner of television commercials. "Lights Over Loon Lake", "Zone of Silence" and "The Singing Float" could be easily turned into slide-tape presentations because they are brief. Filmstrips and video cassette equipment are other means of bringing the books to life. The latter method has been successfully employed in the
Saskatoon Public School System, where knowledgeable people in the field have guided students in critiquing their filmed work.

Whether designing the clothing necessary for settlers to survive on Isis through successive generations or making murals for dioramas, the idea is that these are visual interpretations which provide ancillary information for the stories. The ability to "see" Hughes' tales demonstrates aesthetic receptivity that is the creation of meaning.

e) Other Activities

Some other means of creating interest and sending students back to the books for further reading are literary crossword puzzles enclosed in appropriate shapes like a spaceship for Hughes' science fiction tales or board games based on a single title or many titles (Huck, Hepler, & Hickman, 1987, p. 691). A map detailing the layout of the homes of the Isis settlers or a time line of events leading up to World War II in Blaine's Way are other opportunities of experiencing the stories.

Links with books dealing with similar themes provide a broader framework from which to make literary judgments. Tomi's survival in Devil on My Back invites comparison with such survival literature as Speare's (1983) The Sign of the Beaver, George's (1972) Julie of the Wolves and My Side of the Mountain (1975), or
Mowat's (1956) *Lost in the Barrens*. Hunter in the Dark, discussed alongside books focusing on the death of the central character such as Beckman's (1972) *Admission to the Feast* and Cormier's (1983) *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway* demonstrates the different ways an author approaches this theme. Little's (1984) fine *Mama's Going to Buy You a Mockingbird* and her *Home from Far* (1965), O'Neal's (1982) *A Formal Feeling*, Paterson's (1977) sensitive *Bridge to Terabithia*, and Lowry's (1977) *A Summer to Die* all tell of the loss of characters important to the protagonist. Through the linking and sharing of such books are horizons enlarged.

Commerically prepared jackdaws for use in social studies programmes could be modified for the middle grades. Collecting facsimiles, copies of letters, newspaper articles, diaries, advertisements, or recipes based on Hughes' historical fiction *Gold-Fever Trail: A Klondike Adventure* and Blaine's *Way* provides students with interesting recreations of bygone eras. But jackdaws need not be limited to historical fiction. A jackdaw detailing life before the catastrophe in the science fiction story *Beyond the Dark River* could be designed, as could one of *Isis in the Dark Ages*.

Inviting Hughes to the school as part of an author study becomes another rich resource for further reading. But, as Yolen (1980) cautions, school visits are exhausting for writers (pp. 136-137). Unless children have prepared questions with the guidance
of a teacher and have read all of Hughes' books located in the school library, the visit is reduced to a purposeless endeavour. Biographical information about the author may be obtained from Commire (1979), Kirkpatrick (1983), and Senick (1985) to assist students in preparation of her visit. Arrangement of a two-way phone interview is another method which enables students to contact the author.

Geoff Fox (1984) in his article "Twenty-Four Things to do with a Book" lists activities which may lead to a closer reading and a deeper relationship with a book, a refinement of the individual's own responses. The suggestions listed are for individual work, for work in pairs, groups, or with the whole class and could be adapted for use with Hughes' novels.

Hughes' books may also be studied by making a web of all the possibilities inherent in one or several of her books. "A web is a kind of visual brainstorm that helps to generate ideas and link them to a theme or central focus" (Huck, Hepler, & Hickman, 1987, p. 652). As an idea, the webbing technique was first conceived at the Ohio State University for the third edition of Children's Literature in the Elementary School in 1976 (p. 652). The web, in which the book's possibilities can be mapped collaboratively by the teacher and librarian, or the teacher alone, requires a thorough comprehension "of the content, the relevancy, the literary strengths of a
particular book or genre" (p. 654) before it can be shared with students. Two such webs are included in Appendix B, one designed for *Crisis on Conshelf Ten*, and the other for *The Keeper of the Isis Light*. The suggested ideas for these two webs or for any other that may be designed should not be implemented in their entirety because of time constraints; instead, selections should take into consideration the strengths and capabilities of the students and be choices which provide new experiences.

**Discussion as Exploration**

Like drama, arts and media, and writing, discussion can make way for the middle grade student's "feeling comprehension" (Harding, 1977, p. 390). Says Harding:

> When we have put a good deal into reading a book, there is, as it were, a reverberation of the work in our minds, which leads us to return (sometimes again and again) to elements of that experience.... In a discussion... we sympathetically entertain the frame of reference of our fellow participant, following through its implications into realms of novelty hitherto unsuspected, and then recoil momentarily as we set this new frame and its implications against the context of our own beliefs and assumptions. A successive scanning and reorganization follows, as we move between the novelties we have entertained and our accepted tenets (p. 389).

Harding's acknowledgement of the value of discussion when engaging with a text is echoed by Sutherland, Monson, and Arbuthnot (1981, p. 522). Weiner (1985) concedes that when discussion of the
feelings and emotional upsets of adolescent characters in novels is undertaken in a non-threatening, supportive manner, the effects are beneficial for youths who find more direct interaction difficult to tolerate (p. 135). "Literary discussion remains the primary means of helping children develop as critics of story" (Vandergrift, 1980, p. 196).

A multiplicity of values exists in our society today and children are confronted daily with the complexities of differing values. Essentially, all worthwhile literature deals with values and can provide the opportunity for students to reflect on diverse attitudes. Stewig (1980) outlines three stages students move through as they think about the values expressed in a piece of literature. The first, or exploratory stage, is where students focus on the values inherent in a particular story. Next, the comparison stage deals with other values which might be appropriate in the situation. The reflection stage is where students discuss ways values in the story are like or unlike their own (p. 526).

Students who read Hughes' books cannot help but interact with the characters involved, which helps in formulating personal values and in learning to empathize with the difficulties of people. An excerpt from a teacher-student dyad after reading The Keeper of the Isis Light illustrates how the responses of Adam, an eighth grade student, has enriched his own meaning of the text:
Adam: There were quite a few clues that she was different and I had my picture of her all worked out. It was such a shock! I sat up with a real jolt. I didn't know what to do. I quit reading for half an hour. It was like when all the dwarfs died in *The Hobbit*. I guess you have to be prepared for these shocks if you read Tolkein /sic/.

A.M.: Or Hughes? Do you have any ideas about why we have to bear these shocks?

Adam: Yah! A shock really makes the significant things stand out. The message about prejudice really comes through.

A.M.: Do you read books for meanings, Adam?

Adam: No. I read books for enjoyment. (Big grin)

A.M.: Of course!

Adam: There's something really weird. The captain (of the spaceship) says to Olwen that the little guy - Jody - is too young to be prejudiced. Can you be too young or too old? Is there any age limit to prejudice?

A.M.: You don't think so! Susan's /another student in the class/ troubled by Mark's reaction to Olwen when he finds out about her. She keeps saying Mark was really in love with her /Olwen/ - as a person - not her face or her Tooks, so how could he just stop loving her and being her friend?

Adam: I was shocked by Mark, too. He never really bounced back - ever. I think people who don't really know themselves are the most prejudiced. Mark didn't
know himself or he could've worked it out. If you turn it around, he was just as different as Olwen. She accepted him. Because she loved him, she was almost - part of him, sort of. So she could understand. She could accept him (Maduke, 1981, p. 11).

Such discussions give students an insight into an author's purpose, making for reasoned evaluations about the quality of a book like Keeper.

To facilitate discussion the teacher needs to furnish appropriate supportive contexts. Providing enough time for reflective answers, reassuring pupils that their contributions are valuable both from the teacher's point of view and their own, and asking open ended questions, encourages literary responses that show involvement with the text. Barnes (1976) believes in promoting exploratory talk because in articulating aloud aspects of the story are clarified for oneself. For him, "a classroom dialogue in which sharing predominates over presenting, in which the teacher replies rather than assesses, encourages pupils when they talk ... to bring out existing knowledge to be reshaped by new points of view being presented to them (p. 111). Exploratory talk leads participants back into the text to confirm or extend perceptions.

Literary questions that permit students to re-enter the text reveal new aspects of the work (Sloan, 1984, p. 102). Such questions are not only designed for students to discern literary
elements but also to make inferences and judgments which are part of becoming appreciative, perceptive readers. Questions devised by Vandergrift (1980) are applicable to Hughes' books. Some examples are provided:

- What is the story about? ...

- What idea or ideas does this story make you think about?
  How does the author get you to think about this?

- Do any particular feelings come across in this story?
  Does the story actually make you feel in a certain way or does it make you think about what it is to feel that way?
  How does the author accomplish this? ...

- Is there one character you know more about than any of the others? If so, who is this character and what kind of a person is he/she? How does the author reveal this character to you? ... What words would you use to describe the main character's feelings in this book?

- Are there other characters who are important to the story?
  Who are they? Why are they important in this story?

- Are all the characters the same at the end of the story as they were at the beginning? If not, how and why are they different?

- Is there a lot of action in the story? How is the plot arranged? ... (pp. 207-208).
Everyone concerned with children's books is in some way concerned with values (Giblin, 1977; Paterson, 1979). Some of the questions students may pose are not necessarily those which take one back into the work. After reading Hunter in the Dark, hunting as a sport versus hunting as survival may be brought up as an issue by a student. Speculation could arise about such lines as "life isn't fair, Mike. Or unfair. It just is ..." (Hughes, 1983a, p. 78). The attitudes of doctors like Dr. Gage in Hunter and Handyman in The Bumblebee Flies Anyway may raise questions like these: What is a doctor's responsibility toward a patient who is a minor? Should he tell the truth? The advantage of such classroom discussion is that diverse ideas arising from literature may be explored in a non-threatening manner with the guidance of a sensitive adult.

The development of an aesthetic stance "characterized by the reader's turning his attention toward the full lived-through fusion with the text" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 47) is what good classroom discussion should achieve. For:

the gift of creative reading, like all natural gifts, must be nourished or it will atrophy. And you nourish it, in much the same way you nourish the gift of writing - you read, think, talk, look, listen, hate, fear, love, weep - and bring all of your life like a sieve to what you read. That which is not worthy
of your gift will quickly pass through, but the gold remains (Paterson, 1981, pp. 26-27).

Summary

Hughes' novels are best appreciated when connections are made between the reader and the text. Middle grade students are in a crucial, transitional stage of physical, mental, and emotional maturation. The building of their critical appraisal must be viewed in the light of the developmental aspect of the young adolescent. Schlager, Protherough, and Applebee have examined responses made by students at this level and determined that the developmental aspect has implications for the young adolescent as critic. The educator plays a major role in the nurturing of discerning young critics of literature. Hughes' works mirror the developmental aspects of the middle grade student and invites opportunities for aesthetic, meaningful exploration. Provision for engagement with Hughes' writings in various ways encourages interpretation of the literature in a memorable, enjoyable fashion. Discussion, a primary mode of literature exploration, when undertaken in a conducive atmosphere, clarifies text and develops the aesthetic stance.
CHAPTER SEVEN
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In his essay "The Countries of Invention", Timothy Findley (1984) says: "Most writers write from a private place: a nation or a country in the mind, whose landscape and whose climate are made up of what has been seized and hoarded from the real world" (p. 104). But such countries of invention, "more real than any place we see and hear in our everyday lives" (p. 105) can also encompass an inherent danger. As Findley cautions, a fear experienced by the writer is to be "forgotten forever" (p. 106). "Not to be one of those people chosen, ..., to be hoarded in someone's memory; not to be a resident in someone else's country of invention" (p. 106) is the reader's denial of the writer as witness of people and events. Because he "[records] what others resist remembering," what cannot be comprehended or what may be unlovely, the writer "provides a ground ... on which we can face reality, accommodate reality and possibly, even survive it" (p. 106).

An author like Hughes writes books for young people that allows them to make observations and discoveries about themselves and the society in which they live. But, as Paterson (1981) says, "no matter how good the writing may be, a book is never complete

261
until it is read. The writer does not pass through the gates of excellence alone, but in the company of readers" (p. 4). Views of the past, the joys and dilemmas of the present, and speculations of the future come from Hughes' country in the mind and deserve not to be forgotten.

The intent of this study, therefore, was to make an in-depth exploration of Hughes' novels and short stories and to suggest educational implications for their use in the middle school. Her writings were closely read and analyzed to discern patterns and distinguishing characteristics. Reviews, articles and addresses, whether by Hughes or others, were examined as sources of pertinent information about the author and her works. The researcher went to Edmonton, Alberta where Monica Hughes resides and interviewed the author. Hughes' observations about her writing aspirations and the practice of her craft revealed a sensitive, insightful person dedicated to her art. Her plots derive from simple questions like "what if?" and "what would happen then?" From such ordinary beginnings are created imaginative works of fiction that delight and reward middle grade children and young adults.

A review of author studies in children's literature disclosed that investigators had analyzed specific books, written biographical profiles, or had critiqued the body of an author's works and suggested implications for their use in the classroom. This study
is unique. No one has undertaken an examination of Hughes' complete writings, which are diverse and universal in scope. In particular, no one has sought to scrutinize more closely Hughes' science fiction, which is her metier.

Science fiction, the literary response to the technological explosion, has become an increasingly significant genre as witnessed by the numbers of science fiction courses now taught, in television reruns of Star Trek, and in films by directors like Lucas, Spielberg, and Kubrick. It has been said of the genre of science fiction:

[It] is one of the major literary success areas of the second half of the twentieth century. It is now largely - in emphasis and in fact - an American art form, coinciding with a time of great technological evolution and with the rise of the USA to super-power status (Aldiss & Wingrove, 1986, p. 13).

But, as Aldiss and Wingrove (1986) aver, "the origins and inspirations for science fiction lie outside the United States" (p. 13). This has meant that Hughes' science fiction did not arise in a vacuum but was the inheritor of a tradition rooted in earlier eras. Imaginary lands and imaginary lunar voyages were the earliest fore-runners of modern science fiction which more firmly "[emerged] ... vibrating with technological change" (p. 13) in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Many critics argue that this book was the first real science fiction story because Shelley introduced one of the
central themes of science fiction, which was the proper use of knowledge and the moral responsibility of the scientist for his discovery.

Throughout the nineteenth century various authors such as Poe produced stories which could be classified as science fiction according to modern definitions. But it was the works of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells that are considered the most significant predecessors of twentieth-century science fiction. But Wells and Verne were not alone in producing literature which extrapolated from scientific possibilities. As early as the late 1870s, Luis Senarens contributed most of the 187 Frank Reade stories, which not only "chronicled the exploits of a boy genius responsible for many remarkable inventions, but in Jules Verne-like fashion strewed the exploits over a wide geographic area" (Molson, 1981, p. 336).

In addition to the juvenile series books, there saw the emergence of the science fiction pulp magazines of the early twentieth century. The first magazine was devoted solely to stories which its editor, Hugo Gernsback, labelled "scientifiction" initially. Later the name was changed to "science fiction." But it was John Wood Campbell, one of the field's intellectuals, who rescued science fiction from the formulaic pulps. He encouraged and trained many of the field's innovative genre writers.
The advent of the sixties and the seventies witnessed a marked change in science fiction. For long considered sub-literature, given to Martians and reprehensible monsters who ravished beauteous young damsels, science fiction now became more introspective, reflecting society's preoccupations such as overpopulation, the energy crisis, and technology run rampant. Writers experimented with new literary styles which enabled science fiction to jettison its "trash" image to join the mainstream of literature. Says Lester del Rey (1976): "Science fiction is no longer the literature of the hobbyist and wild-eyed visionary. Today, readers of all persuasions find stories that suit their tastes and interests. It has branched out to include the whole area of literature" (p. 10). Writers like Pynchon, Lessing, and Atwood have used science fiction as a vehicle for exploration of ideas.

Children's science fiction paralleled their adult counterparts. Thrilling wonder tales exerted considerable influence on young readers, as evidenced by the success of the Tom Swift and Great Marvel series. Later there were Heinlein's books such as *Rocket Ship Galileo*. These plots would be considered naive by today's standards. But the jocular tales with thistledown plots and characterization like those written by Ellen McGregor, Ruthven Todd, and Eleanor Cameron diversified considerably since the 1950s.
Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*, which won the Newbery medal, Robert O'Brien's *Z for Zachariah*, the novels of Sleator, John Christopher, Peter Dickinson, Hamilton, LeGuin, and Engdahl, among others, essayed new and wider-ranging topics which encompassed theological speculation, the political abuses of behaviour modification and mind control, the aftermath of nuclear catastrophe, ecological balance, and the like. In such a climate Hughes' writing emerged.

Scoles (1975) speaks of the popular, uninformed generalizations about science fiction; that it uses "language clumsily, with neither grace nor wit"; that it is populated by pasteboard characters; that it is, in the plotting, "either hackneyed, episodic, or both"; and that its "subject matter is unreal, escapist, and ultimately trivial" (p. 47). Nothing could be further from the truth, as Hughes' science fiction has proven, for she has written with clarity and vision. Literary elements such as flashback, metaphor, telepathic sequences and mythical patterns like the trickster, the Egyptian Goddess Isis, and the journey have been woven into tales of charm and humor which are not bogged down in technical gagdetry. Her multifacted worlds are peopled by credible adolescents, both male and female, whose attitudes mirror contemporary teenage concerns. As a serious novelist of ideas in action, her themes merit consideration, for Hughes has examined
prejudice, the exploitation of minority cultures dependent on those more advanced, the quest for selfhood, and the abuse of technology among others in ways that avoid the hortatory voice. Her stories, based on extrapolations from existing technology, are exciting and, far from being escapist, her fiction, while "[offering] us a world clearly and radically discontinuous from the one we know, ... returns to confront the known world in some cognitive way" (p. 29). Or, to phrase it in another manner, "the questions at the core of [Hughes] serious SF stories have to do with the nature of our entire reality, the reaches of the universe ... and what this means for mankind" (Carr, 1973, pp. 7-8).

Hughes' short stories, like her novels, are also invested with originality and creativeness. Themes found in her science fiction novels, such as different modes of perceiving reality, the search for identity, and the concern for ecological matters are imbued with the best kind of "writing [which] enlivens thought" (Bogue, 1985, p. 31). The willingness of the young to challenge axioms and long held beliefs in the face of conventional wisdom, as does Jody N'Komo in The Guardian of Isis, is an aspect also to be found in a short story like "Chris and Sandy". Adolescence may be the classic time for believing parents do not understand their offspring, but Hughes does not collude with the reader to suggest such habits are the hallmark by which a mindless moron such as a
parent may be recognized. Rather, in Hughes' stories the basis of the young hero or heroine's success is flexibility, an essential advantage over age. Survival of the human race involves reaching beyond isolated confines, an aspect characterized in "The Iron-Barred Door." To live is to risk, to reach out, "to boldly go where no man has gone before." The affirmation that mankind has the potential to succeed if only he or she is willing to persevere despite discouragement permeates all of Hughes' fiction.

Even at its most formulaic, Hughes' historical selections have reflected this need to challenge, to adventure. While the early stories appear contrived and stilted, Blaine's Way, whose protagonist's rites of passage culminates in experiencing World War II, demonstrates Hughes' growth as a more assured writer of historical novels. But it is in realistic fiction where Hughes' writing evinces a stance more imaginative than that of the historical dimension. Her work in this genre has been distinguished by one book in particular, Hunter in the Dark. It has received the Canada Council Prize for Children's Literature, has merited inclusion on the American Library Association Best Books for Young Adults list, and has also garnered other awards and favourable reviews.

Gloomy images of adolescence have been presented in teenage fiction (Thompson, 1981a, p. 43). Says Earnshaw (1983):
The worrying conclusion is that children thrive on hate and fear. It is the beginning of the syndrome that ends with them as grey-faced grannies and grandads, afraid to step out into the suburban dark for dread of the mutant muggers lurking there. Children like to squash things, but we coax them into more positive behaviour (p. 240).

Hughes imbues her stories with a prevailing note of optimism which is not contrived. Her characters' growth into selfhood brings sorrow and suffering, as well as gain. Concern for others renders one vulnerable to hurt and loss. But with this knowledge that life is not always easy and solutions are elusive, there comes the understanding that the greater good has been achieved. It is a particularly valuable lesson for the adolescent, who is moving from the self-preoccupation of childhood towards the responsibilities of adulthood. Threaded throughout the stories is the implied notion of life's magic, of its inherent possibilities evinced in man's capacity to dream, to wonder.

Hughes' childhood experiences of being read aloud to, whether at home or in the conducive atmosphere of Notting Hill and Ealing High School in London, proved influential in aiding the young child to appreciate the "magic" of multitudinous worlds. The supportive home and school environment was also instrumental in fostering Hughes' growth as a disciplined writer who has worked hard to perfect her craft. The creation of believable worlds such as Isis,
the twin cities of Komilant and Kamalant, Roshan, and the computer-run city were a result of painstaking research, especially in the science fiction genre.

According to Hughes the composition of her stories evolved in four stages. The first stage, the germ or idea, emanated from such varied sources as newspaper articles, an incident at home, or a television programme. The process of meditation which followed was deemed the most important stage. Then emerged the first draft, and finally, the revision stage, which entailed minor changes. Parallels and contrasts were a featured characteristic, peopled by characters shaped physically, mentally, and emotionally by their surroundings. A combination of sound logic, research, and trust in the subconscious allowed for imaginative works to be brought into being. Sequels occurred for two reasons, either at an editor's request, or because the author herself felt it was a necessity. As Hughes disliked the cliffhanger approach to sequels, she has devised each story in a series so that it stands on its own.

Hughes' fiction offers myriad opportunities for middle grade students to gain insight into the human condition. Appreciation of the uniqueness of Hughes' literary output can be understood by readers in the middle school if nurtured by discerning educators. Teachers and librarians serve as a vital link between the world of Hughes and their intended audience. It is most important that
these adults be conversant with ways to share Hughes' stories which, on the one hand, deepen students' insight, but, on the other, do so without marring the enjoyment of the works. However, in planning literary encounters with middle school students, educators must be aware of and be guided by the developmental needs and interests of this age group. Young adolescents experience tremendous changes, physically, intellectually, and emotionally, characterized by the search for self identity. Ambivalence is expressed in that they alternately struggle against adult authority, yet seek security and reassurance. They prefer the social aspects the peer group affords rather than adult lifestyles. Intellectually, they move away from the concrete operational style into the realm of formal operational thought. Able to analyze critically, adolescents imagine the possibilities inherent in a situation, hypothesize and discover combinations of eventualities. As such, the books of Hughes are eminently suited for exploration, since research suggests students look to literature to shape and refine their perceptions of the world they inhabit. Schlager (1978) believes that young adolescents' reading preferences reflect their developmental view. Protherough (1983) maintains that while initial responses to books are simple, emotional reactions, during early adolescence students assume a more critical stance, an aspect Applebee (1978) reiterates.
Middle grade students' response to the literature encountered does not imply they become critics in the traditional sense of developing scholars, researchers, and professional reviewers. Rather, "it is an approach to literature that gives shape and structure to experience" and "is what happens anywhere literature is treated as an art" (Sloan, 1984, p. 21). This literary exploration signifies an appreciation of how a story means, which includes using literary terms that clarify perceptions for self and enhances reading enjoyment. In sharing insights with others, middle grade students become aware of the significance of the works, delighting in them as artistic entities while refining their own perceptions (Tucker, 1982, p. 188).

Educators who come into contact with middle grade students are crucial to their joyful and productive entry into the world of Hughes' books. Part of a teacher's responsibility is to be knowledgeable about books so that he or she may help students attend to aesthetic meanings insightfully. In order for classroom activities to develop literacy perceptions, it is necessary that educators send students back into the story for reconsideration, taking into account the nature of the work, the maturity of the children and the manner in which the story is presented. Exploratory talk should be promoted in an atmosphere conducive to literary responses, allowing for students to clarify their own perceptions, to
formulate them in a manner that others may comprehend, and to evaluate them in the light of new and different responses. Thoughtfully planned extension activities nourish students' sensitive awareness about Hughes' writings. Reading aloud, drama, writing, and arts and media, are among many forms of expression which afford students opportunities to interact with the literature in an enjoyable manner. An exploration of Hughes' writings could culminate in the author's visit to the school or in phone interviews. Such an engagement would be invaluable. Students would have reinforced the notion that "the true artist is never a manipulator" (Paterson, 1981, p. 45), but is one whose perceptive vision of the world allows readers to respond to her truths, which, in turn, help perceive their world in a fresh, thoughtful manner.

Hughes' books add a Canadian identity. As Ellis (1985) maintains:

The story of the settlers on Isis - the story of the newcomer with all its expectation and fear, excitement and loneliness - is very close to the surface in the life of every non-aboriginal Canadian. The landscape of Isis - pockets of habitability in an otherwise large and dangerous land - or the actively hostile natural forces in Space Trap ... [or Hunter in the Dark] all reflect the imagery of much Canadian perception of nature. Monica Hughes' preoccupation with communication - personal, as between Olwen and Mark; interspecies, as between humans and the pink blob-creature 'Fifth Daughter' in Space Trap; or across vast distances of space - reflects
what has always been a Canadian preoccupation: how to transfer information between two points (p. 663).

But, while Hughes' works reflect a Canadian tone, they are international in thrust. Earth's overcrowding in the Isis books, the possibility of undersea or moon habitats as in Crisis on Conshelf Ten, or Earthdark reflect universal concerns, as do her themes which transcend national boundaries. They are given strength because of Hughes' gift of narrative powers.

Because Hughes is a writer who questions and explores, her work has considered a fresh avenue. Her latest work, Sandwriter, heralds a new beginning in a different genre, namely, the realm of fantasy. This work blends realism and fantasy to create a fine, immensely readable selection.

This study has concentrated on identifying the unique characteristics of Hughes' writings and on discovering patterns which link them. She writes four kinds of tales - historical fiction, realistic fiction, science fiction, which is her strength, and fantasy, but they are united by similarities. The concepts affirm Hughes' interest to write realistically whether her stories take place on a planet in outer space, or closer to home. Life may not always be simple, but one must reach out and risk to change the world for the better. Her stories reflect an artist who cares deeply about her craft, and communicates this feeling to her
audience with love and respect. In terms of readership, Hughes "is a valuable writer because her books fall into that somewhat sparsely populated territory ... for ... intermediate readers" (Ellis, 1985, p. 663). Like all true writers, Hughes belongs more properly to that vast universe of the future which transcends merely national boundaries, and so her books are deserving of attention.

Conclusions

The conclusions of this study which identified the distinguishing characteristics of Hughes' works are:

1. Hughes writes four types of novels - historical fiction, contemporary realistic fiction, science fiction, and fantasy.

2. Science fiction is Hughes' metier, which as a genre, is heir to tradition and prevailing social conditions. The human condition is far more important than technical hardware in her science fiction.

3. Hughes can be characterized as a serious novelist of ideas, for her themes reflect pertinent, contemporary, universal issues such as the clash of minority groups who are exploited by those more dominant, the problems of maturing youths, the concerns with mixed heritage, and environmental and technological abuse.

4. Hughes' characters are credible, realistic young adolescents who are not supermen, but are heroic. They seek to change their world rather than escape from it. This does not mean they rebel against adult authority using terrorist tactics. Rather, complex solutions are viewed from different angles and, while solutions appear elusive, a reasoned approach is advocated.
5. A nihilistic universe is not encountered, for threaded through the tales is a note of optimism. But it is not a false hope, for the characters pay a price in that they are scarred either physically or emotionally.

6. Contrasts and similarities are needed to make the outsider view his or her own culture in a new light. Differing modes of perceiving reality permeate many stories in which "alien" takes on a different tone.

7. Literary devices like allusions, flashback, metaphor, telepathic sequences, and mythic echoes add texture to the stories, investing them with a richer, deeper meaning.

8. The search for self always entails a journey, whether physical or spiritual.

9. While Canadian in tone, her stories transcend national boundaries to embrace the universal.

10. Serious moral issues are raised about the nature of wisdom as opposed to factual knowledge, about the consequences of selfishness and generosity, about the choices which affect the nature and purpose of the community. While moral issues are at the core of the conflicts they never impede the pace or pulse of reflective, enjoyable stories.

11. Hughes' short stories, while echoing themes found in her novels, are imaginative and well-written in their own right.

12. Ideas for her books come from varied sources and are turned into exciting, believable tales.

13. The meditative process is most important in Hughes' writings.

14. Sequels are born of two influences: those requested by an editor and those generated through internal reflection. The sequels are entire tales in themselves, written with ingenuity.
Conclusions of the Study

The conclusions of this study which focused on the implementation of Hughes' writings in the middle school are:

1. Middle school students are able to read literature assuming a critical stance because they are intellectually ready. They are in the formal operational stage of development which means they have entered the realm of the hypothetical. Abstract concepts and the exploration of "what if" indicates a readiness to study the works of a writer such as Hughes.

2. Because they are in that intermediate stage, between childhood and adulthood, they need books which can bridge the chasm, and Hughes' books are qualified on this basis.

3. Besides being eminently suited to the middle school reader, these tales which mirror the young adult's perceptions of reality are also fine works of literature and deserve their scrutiny.

4. The educator's role is vital. With his or her greater knowledge of literature, more opportunities, and more diverse opportunities should be given to students to respond to Hughes' writings.

5. Since one the characteristics of the middle school child is to engage in interactions of a social nature, teachers should allow adolescents to participate in collaborative projects in which ideas encountered in the books may be discussed in groups without the teacher being an obtrusive presence.

6. In Hughes' supportive home and school environment, reading aloud provided a major impetus for her imaginative ruminations. Therefore, it would be deemed invaluable to have those of her books which lend themselves to this activity be read aloud.
APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY

1925 Monica born 3 November in Liverpool, England, daughter of Phyllis Fry and Edward Lindsay Ince.
1926 Goes to Cairo, Egypt, with parents.
1927 Sister Elizabeth born.
1941 Father dies.
1942 One year math at the University of Edinburgh.
1943 Joins the WRNS (Women's Royal Naval Service).
1946 Studies for a year to be a dress designer in London, England.
1950 Works in dress factory in Bulawayo, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).
1951 Bank clerk in Umtali, Rhodesia.
1952 Comes to Ottawa, Canada. Works in National Research Council, Ottawa, Ontario as laboratory technician.
1957 Marries Glen Hughes 22 April, 1957, in Ottawa.
1959 Daughter Elizabeth born.
1960 Daughter Adrienne born.
1962 Son Russell born.
1964  Son Thomas born.
1964  Moves from London, Ontario, to Edmonton, Alberta.
1968  Mother dies.
1971  Highpoint. Devotes energies to full-time writing.
1972  Sister Elizabeth dies.
1975  Crisis on Conshelf Ten.
1977  Earthdark; "Dragon-Food Cake" in Magook.
1978  The Ghost Dance Caper; The Tomorrow City.
1979  Beyond the Dark River.
1980  The Keeper of the Isis Light; Hunter in the Dark receives the Beaver Award given for an unpublished manuscript, and the Alberta Culture Writing-for-Youth Competition sponsored by Alberta Culture and Irwin Publishing, then known as Clarke Irwin.
1981  The Guardian of Isis; receives the Vicky Metcalf Award for a body of fiction inspirational to children; The Keeper of the Isis Light is an American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults.
1982  Beckoning Lights; Hunter in the Dark, now published for the first time; The Isis Pedlar; Ring-Rise Ring-Set; The Treasure of the Long Sault; "the Iron-Barred Door" in Contexts: Anthology Two; "Lights Over Loon Lake" in Owl; The Guardian of Isis receives the Canada Council Prize for Children's Literature; The Keeper of the Isis Light receives the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) Certificate of Honour.
1983  My Name is Paula Popowich; Space Trap; "The Tutti-Frutti Tree" in Impressions Primary Program-Teacher Anthology I; Hunter in the Dark receives the Canada Council Prize for Children's Literature, the Saskatchewan Library Association Young Adult Novel Award, the Writers' Guild of Alberta R. Ross Annett Award, and is an American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults; "The Iron-Barred Door" receives the Vicky Metcalf Short Story Award; Ring-Rise Ring-Set is runner up for the Guardian Award.

1984  Devil on My Back; "Zone of Silence" in Out of Time; Space Trap receives the Writers' Guild of Alberta R. Ross Annett Award. Writer-in-residence at the University of Alberta, Edmonton.

1985  Sandwriter; Hunter in the Dark receives the Silver Feather Federal Association of Women Doctors of Germany Award. Honour List of "Deutscher Jugendlbuch preis."

1986  Blaine's Way; The Dream Catcher; "Chris and Sandy" in The Window of Dreams; "The Ice Riders" in Unicorn Reading Series-Reader 16; "The Singing Float" in Dragons and Dreams.
APPENDIX B

AWARDS
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1980  Hunter in the Dark, Beaver Award (given for an unpublished manuscript).
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      Ring-Rise Ring-Set, runner up for Guardian Award.

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1985  Hunter in the Dark, Silver Feather Federal Association of Women Doctors of Germany Award.
      Honour list of "Deutscher Jugendbuch pries".
APPENDIX C
WEBBINGS OF CRISIS ON CON SHELF TEN
AND THE KEEPER OF THE ISIS LIGHT

It should be noted that these activities, designed for classroom use, should not all be implemented due to time constraints. Teachers may select only those activities which are felt to be most useful for their students.

Pre-Reading Activities

1. Introduction of the book by teacher or librarian

   This is a story about fifteen-year-old Kepler Masterman, the first person to be actually born on the Moon, who arrives on Earth for a six month visit only to be greeted with some unexpected and unwelcome surprises. First of all, he can hardly breathe; and, at six times his moon-weight, he can barely stagger through the heavy earth atmosphere. 'This low-grav syndrome can be a problem,' someone says sympathetically. But for Kepler the only solution seems to be another atmospheric change, and he joins relatives who live in an experimental underwater community - Conshelf Ten. There he discovers all the excitement, and more, than he had originally hoped for on the earth's surface. His new found cousin Jon, with his beautiful girlfriend, Hilary, are friendly at first. But why do they deny the existence of the strange swimmers who float through the ocean depths with no breathing apparatus of any kind? Who are the mysterious Gillmen, and what is the sinister plot that drives Kepler deeper and deeper into danger? Why not read the book and find out what happens.

2. Place the following words in coloured discs: rilles, basalt, guantlet, decompression chamber, hydroponic, futuristic, manifesto, kelp, embolism, breccia, transmuted, narcosis.

   Direct students to select a word and place its definition and a sentence containing its meaning on the back of the disc. Ask students to work in groups constructing mobiles of the disc.
Map Skills

1. Locate on a map of the Moon the following places:

Copernicus
Kepler Crater
Apennine Range
Carpathian Mountains
Aristarchus
Alphonsus
Mare Ibrium

2. Make a map of your own of the main area in which Kepler lives on the Moon. Place on your map the locations mentioned in the book, e.g., the Sea of Serenity.

3. Match the following Moon locations with their Latin spellings. You may want to consult your atlas to locate these places.

Sea of Tranquility  Mare Imbrium
Ocean of Storms  Procellarum
Sea of Rains  Mare Tranquillitatis
Sea of Serenity  Mare Serenitatis

Considering Alternatives

1. How would the story have changed if Kepler had adjusted to Earth's atmosphere?

2. What might have happened if the Earth-ferry in which Kepler was travelling to Earth orbit developed a) a malfunction, b) was hijacked by a band of interplanetary terrorists?

3. What might have occurred if the mining companies on Earth decided they could not afford to ship water to the Moon inhabitants because they felt their own resources were being depleted?

4. What might have happened had Kepler not been rescued by one of the gillmen when he was slammed into the thickest part of the kelp forest because of a powerful current of water?

5. What might have been Kepler's fate if his Uncle Ted had not so ably defended him when he was formally charged with sabotage and willful destruction of $1,000,000 of Conshelf Ten property, namely three million prime herring ready for market?
6. What might have occurred if the operation which made the gillmen what they were - able to survive underwater without extraneous gear - proved to be an irreversible process?

7. What might have happened if Kepler had not persuaded the gillmen to wait for the U.N.'s decision regarding the Moon's application for independence?

8. What might have happened to Ian and the other gillers who had brought Kepler to Cornshelf Ten if they had been taken into custody?

9. What changes may have occurred had Kepler decided to remain on Conshelf Ten rather than returning to his birthplace, the Moon.

Writing

1. Write a letter to a friend explaining why you liked or did not like this book.

2. Write a day's menu based on foods mentioned in Conshelf Ten. How does this menu compare to a Moon menu? (Check Earthdark for this).

3. Write some of Kepler's journal or diary entries. You could choose to write journal entries from the viewpoint of other characters, e.g., Ian the gillman, Hilary, Jon King.

4. Write the copy for a newspaper front page which is devoted to the winning of Moon's independence.

5. Jot down facts of interest you learned from reading the book. Share your findings with a friend.

6. Compare the similarities of life on the Moon colony with that of Conshelf Ten, particularly their jobs and their homes (Check Earthdark).

7. Write a scene that could have happened but did not. After you have written the scene, explain how it could have changed the outcome of the book, e.g., what might have happened if the gillmen hadn't waited for the U.N.'s decision regarding Moon's application for independence.
Poetry

I, Icarus

There was a time when I could fly. I swear it.
Perhaps, if I think hard for a moment, I can even tell you the year.
My room was on the ground floor at the rear of the house.
My bed faced a window.
Night after night I lay on my bed and willed myself to fly.
It was hard work, I can tell you.
Sometimes I lay perfectly still for an hour before I felt my body rising from the bed.
I rose slowly, slowly until I floated three or four feet above the floor.
Then, with a kind of swimming motion, I propelled myself toward the window.
Outside, I rose higher and higher, above the pasture fence, above the clothesline, above the dark, haunted trees beyond the pasture.
And, all the time, I heard the music of flutes.
It seemed the wind made this music.
And sometimes there was voices singing.


Toward the end of Crisis on Conshelf Ten these thoughts are expressed by Kepler:

When Icarus put on wings he thought he was as great as the gods and he tried to fly to the sun. For his pride his wings were metted off and he fell into the sea and was drowned.

My people had put on wings and gone to the Moon. One day perhaps we would reach out to the planets. Maybe my son. Or his son.

Ian and his people had exchanged lungs for gills and ventured into the ocean where no unprotected man had dared before (pp. 143-144).

a) In what ways are Kepler's thoughts and those of the person in the poem alike?
b) Have you ever wanted to explore new worlds in reality or in your imagination? In a paragraph write where you would or would not like to adventure in reality or in your mind. If you prefer, you could discuss the pros and cons of such an activity with a friend.

c) Read the story of Icarus and Daedalus in any one of these books:


d) You may wish to research the history of flight or undersea exploration.

Flight

All day long the clouds go by,
Early winter clouds, not high;
Wide as charity they range,
Restless, regimented, strange.

From my neighbourhood a crow
Takes it in his head to go
Somewhere else he knows about;
Melancholy bird, no doubt.

Un he rises from a tree
Where a yellow leaf or three
Still hand on for hanging's sake,
Tug their yellow stems and shake.

Caw! he cries, as though he knew
Something worth his while to do
In an empty tree elsewhere
Flap! he takes his blackness there.
Me too! I would like to fly
Somewhere else beneath the sky,
Happy though my choice may be
Empty tree for empty tree.


1. People have always been fascinated by the prospect of flying. This poet has chosen to write about flight. Is the person in this poem like that in "I, Icarus",? or Kepler? or yourself? In what way(s)?

2. In many legends and tales people are transformed into other animals or birds. Given a choice, which bird would you select to become and what worlds would you like to explore. Perhaps you could describe to a friend the kind of sensations you might experience in the guise of a bird looking down at our world.

The Diver

I would like to dive
Down
Into this still pool
Where the rocks at the bottom are safely deep.

Into the green
Of the water seen from within,
A strange light
Streaming past my eyes -

Things hostile;
You cannot stay here, they seem to say;
The rocks, slime-covered, the undulating
Fronds of weeds -

And drift slowly
Among the cooler zones;
Then, upward turning,
Break from the green glimmer
Into the light,
White and ordinary of the day,
And the mild air,
With the breeze and the comfortable shore.


1. This poem, and the ones below, by Robert Hayden and Ian Serraillier, tell about a diver. If you were Kepler which one would you prefer? Be prepared to defend your answer in written or oral format.

2. As a gillman, write a poem about your life underwater. If you wish, you could write from the perspective of any one of the other underwater characters, e.g., Hilary, Uncle Ted, Aunt Janet, Dr. McIntosh.

3. What if Kepler had discovered an underwater wreck containing bullion? As Kepler, decide what you would do with all these treasures. Discuss in pairs.

4. As undersea creatures you resent the intrusion of divers into your watery world. In groups of three decide how you would deal with this situation.
The Diver

Sank through easeful azure. Flower creatures flashed and shimmered there--lost images fadingly remembered. Swiftly descended into canyon of cold nightgreen emptiness.

Freefalling, weightless as in dreams of wingless flight, plunged through infra-space and came to the dead ship, carcass that swarmed with voracious life. Angelfish, their lively blue and yellow prised from darkness by the flashlight's beam, thronged her portholes. Moss of bryozoans blurred, obscured her metal. Snappers, gold groupers explored her, fearless of bubbling manfish. I entered the wreck, awed by her silence, feeling more keenly the iron cold.

With flashlight probing fogs of water saw the sad slow dance of gilded chairs, the ectoplasmic swirl of garments, drowned instruments of buoyancy, drunken shoes. Then livid gesturings, eldritch hide and seek of laughing faces. I yearned to find those hidden ones, to fling aside the mask and call to them, yield to rapturous whisperings, have done with self and every dinning vain complexity.

Yet in lanquid frenzy strove as one freezing fights off sleep desiring sleep; strove against the cancelling arms that suddenly surrounded me, fled the numbing kisses that I craved. Reflex of life-wish? Respirator's brittle belling? Swam from the ship somehow; somehow began the measured rise.

The Diver

I put on my aqua-lung and plunge,
Exploring, like a ship with a glass keel,
The secrets of the deep. Along my lazy road
On and on I steal -
Over waving bushes which at a touch explode
Into shrimps, then closing rock to the tune of the tide;
Over crabs that vanish in puffs of sand.
Look, a string of pearls bubbling at my side
Breaks in my hand -
Those pearls were my breath! ... Does that hollow hide
Some old Armada wreck in seaweed furled,
Crusted with barnacles, her cannon rusted,
The Great San Philip? What bullion in her hold?
Pieces of eight, silver crowns, and bars of solid gold?

I shall never know. Too soon the clasping cold
Fastens on flesh and limb
And pulls me to the surface. Shivering, back I swim
To the beach, the noisy crowds, the ordinary world.


The Shell

I took away the ocean once,
Spiraled in a shell,
And happily for months and months
I heard it very well.

How is it then that I should hear
What months and months before
Had blown upon me sad and clear,
Down by the grainy shore?


1. What objects would Kepler take away with him from Conshelf Ten to his home on the Moon? In pairs, discuss why you chose the particular objects you did.
2. Suppose you were an Earth traveller going to visit relatives on the Moon. What gifts would you take with you and why?

Watching the Moon

September evenings such as these
The moon hides early in the trees,
And when we drive along the shore
I think I miss the trees once more
Because the moon is coming down
Beyond the branches and will drown.


a) In pairs:
Kepler and gillman - Hold a conversation in which you, as Kepler, describe the beauties of the Moonscape. Then have the gillman describe the merits of underwater living. Reverse roles. Later decide who puts forward the better defense for his mode of habitation.

b) Art - Paint a September picture of life on the Moon or one of the same season depicting life on Conshelf Ten.

The Starfish

When I see a starfish
Upon the shining sand,
I ask him how he liked the sea.
And if he likes the land.
"Would you rather be a starfish
Or an out-beyond-the-bar fish?"
I whisper very softly,
And he seems to understand.
He never says directly,
But I fancy all the same
That he knows the answer quite as well
As if it were his name:
"An out-beyond-the-bar fish
Is much happier than a starfish";
And when I look for him again
He's gone the way he came.


1. If you were given a choice of where to live, as Kepler was, where would you decide to reside and why?

2. The gillmen, by choice, decided to become, in a sense, mutants. Can you think of other situations where man, because of circumstances, may possibly have to adapt quite drastically in order to integrate with a different environment.

3a. What if Hilary had decided to become a gillwoman? Assume you are already one. In pairs - one Hilary, the other a gillwoman, try to convince Hilary to have the operation. Reverse roles.

b. Hilary is now a gillwoman. Write a paragraph describing her feelings in this new role.

After the Flight of Ranger 7

Moon, old fossil,
to be scrubbed

and studied like
a turtle's stomach,

prodded over
on your back,

invulnerable hump
that stumped us,

pincers prepare to
pick your secrets,
bludgeons of light
to force your seams.

Old fossil, glistening
in the continuous rain

of meteorites
blown to you from

between the stars,
stilt feet mobilize

to alight upon you,
ticking feelers

determine your fissures,
to impact a pest

of electric eggs
in the cracks

of your cold
volcanoes. Tycho,

Copernicus, Kepler,
look for geysers,

strange abrasions,
zodiacal wounds.


1. As Kepler, describe the moon as you now know it to a friend in oral or written format.

2. Go to your library and find out who Tycho, Copernicus, and Kepler were. Share your findings with a small group or the entire class.

Extended Learning Activities

1. Compare the synthetic Moon foods with those of the ocean dwellers. Which do you think would taste better? Why?
2. Research the communication among sea life such as the whales, dolphins, and porpoises.

3. The dedication of this book is to Jacques Cousteau and his fellow explorers. Who is he and what explorations has he undertaken?

4. Find out how Japan and other countries are harvesting the sea. What do they harvest and what products do they make from them?

5. Find out all you can about Earth's exploration of the Moon, paying particular attention to surface conditions, lunar probes and so on.

6. Find out more about Angkor Wat, the Taj Mahal, the Sphinx, which were mentioned by Kepler.

7. Monica Hughes, in the author's note, says that all the "facts" in this story, set early in the 21st Century, "are either in the experimental stage, on the drawing board, or at least seriously discussed as possibilities today." Such references are made to the wetsuit, the magne train, the hoverjet, buildings beneath the sea, and so on. Research and find out any other 21st Century ideas which scientists are investigating. Share your findings with the class.

Extension: You may wish to discuss new designs, inventions that you may construct for life in the next century.

Writing and Art

1. Design a movie poster for the book. Cast the major characters in the book with real actors and actresses. Include a scene or dialogue from the book in the layout of the poster. Remember, you are trying to convince someone to see the movie based on the book, so your writing should be persuasive.

2. Make a shoebox diorama of a scene from the Conshelf colony. Write a paragraph explaining the scene and attach it to the diorama.
3. Design a book jacket for this story. Include the title, author and publishing company on the cover. Be sure the illustration relates to an important aspect of the book. On the inside flap or on the back of your jacket, write a paragraph telling about the book, explaining why this book makes for interesting reading.

**Drama**

1. Imagine you are about to make a feature-length film. Cast all the major characters from members of your class, considering both appearance and personality. Tell why you select each person for a given part.

2. In pairs. A & B. A then interviews Kepler after he has returned to the Moon. Reverse roles.

3. Improvise the court scene in which Kepler is tried.

4. Work out a scene with a climax based on one of the following locations.
   
   a) the city under the sea - dance drama to music
   b) adrift in space - improvisation
   c) planet of aliens - improvisation
   d) the theatre of Death - improvisation

5. Being aware and sensitive to other people is an important part of drama. Try these exercises.

   a) In pairs. One is Kepler (or Hilary) - the other is their reflection in a mirror. Starting very slowly, make Kepler (or Hilary) move as one. Go slowly at first and pay attention to detail. Work first in pairs, then as a whole group with half the class looking in the mirror and the other half as reflections.

   b) Try the same exercise with six people standing behind one another, the whole line must move as one, yet there must be no actual leader. Sense what the other people are going to do. Work very slowly at first. You may find that gentle water music will help your concentration.
6. Split into three groups. Group A compose themselves into a
group tableau titled "The Victors of the Sea." Members of
group B attempt to reconstruct the tableau, using group C as
models, by whispering instructions to their partners in
group C. Group C must work with their eyes closed, as they
listen and try to reconstruct the statue by assuming the
poses described. The distance between Group B and Group C
must be at least twelve feet.

7. Get into groups of three, in which one person is a statue,
one a sculptor, one a block of clay. The statue takes up its
position on being given a title such as "Underwater Crisis,"
"The Gillman," "Sea Change," "Oceanic Ridge." The task of
the sculptor is to use the "human" clay to sculpt an exact
reproduction of the human statue. The care, detail, and skill
of the sculptor are all important; he can pick up the quality
of his sculpting from underwater music which will be played
in the background.

8. Loosening Up Physically:
Listen to the music which will help you to imagine you are
under the ocean in a heavy diving suit. As you move slowly
and carefully imagine what it must be like to explore the
ocean floor. When you sense the climax beginning to build
in the music you discover a large, barnacle-encrusted treasure
chest. Move slowly toward it. Find a way of prising open
the chest and take out the precious object which you find in­
side. End the sequence in an attitude of triumph and exulta­
tion.

Extension:

a) You are a gillman. Move freely as if you were accustomed
to the water. You discover the treasure chest and take
out the thing you find but it is repulsive in nature.
End the sequence in an attitude of fear and horror.

b) You are Kepler in a wetsuit. Decide what you will do
when you encounter the treasure chest because you are
unable to open it at this point.

9. You are a scientist on Conshelf Ten who, after a great many
years, has completed research on a substance which you hope
will be of enormous benefit to mankind. You have to decide
what the substance is to be. It is in a glass vial on the shelf before you in your undersea laboratory. Your scientific training tells you that ahead still remains painstaking testing and research before the product is marketable. But you're human and enthusiastic - it's been eleven years - and your emotions urge you: "Try it. Go on. It's fine." Feel that initial doubt and indecision which is resolved when you finally drink it. From that moment you realize it has been a grotesque mistake, for something has gone terribly and tragically wrong. (Appropriate music will help create this atmosphere of tension). Pain comes - your knees buckle, your eyesight dims. You have to reach your research notes somehow - but the pain is intensifying - getting worse ...

10. Imagine you are people designated to build further underwater homes on Conshelf Ten. Even allowing for your special wet-suits, you move about slowly. Remember the nature of your environment in whatever you do, sawing, hammering, riveting - all these things will be affected. Listen to the music to bring your scene to a climax of triumphal completion and hold the freeze as a still photograph. Work in groups of six or eight.

11. You are to imagine yourself as a human from another space colony. You speak in a different language and you move in a manner which is unlike that of Earth. Be comfortable with this alien language and speak it with authority. We now have a large number of humans who speak in foreign languages and move in ways that reflect the atmosphere of their own home environments. Here is the framework for an improvisation. It is the year 1374 and you are all members of the United Federation of Galaxies, successor to the United Nations. You have all gathered for a meeting in which far reaching decisions are to be made regarding inter-galactic peace and security. A splinter group of new underwater gillmen has evolved who, unlike their forbears in Crisis on Conshelf Ten, will not resort to peaceful negotiation (you decide what the problem is they are in disagreement with) and are holding the world to ransom through a specially created device. Split into small groups of four, five, seven, or more. The entire group elects a chairman and a messenger; the latter moves away from the group. The chairman has discovered a problem has now occurred. The instantaneous translation devices are malfunctioning and each delegate has to make himself
understood to other delegates who do not know his language. This is your concern - to find a means of real communication. Use methods to help communicate well with the others in your group. In the middle of this discussion about inter-galactic disarmament the messenger arrives. He is holding in his hand a strange and unusually shaped object. He is convinced this object is of the utmost value to the safety of the universe. He feels it will be a deterrent to the gillmen. He explains his theory to the chairman who attempts to convey it to the delegates. They have other theories and a furious argument develops. Finally, the chairman is unable to keep order and chaos ensues. End your improvisation the instant before the first blow is struck.

12. a) Dramatize the effect that Moon's lack of gravity would have on an Earth person.

b) Dramatize the effects of being six times Moon weight when returning to Earth from the Moon.

Values Clarification

1. Was Hilary justified in acting as she did toward Jon? toward Kepler? Why or why not?

2. What made Kepler take up the cause of the gillmen? Do you think he should have become involved?

3. Do you think Kepler's choice to return to the Moon was a wise decision?

4. What do you feel about the gillmen's choice to mutilate their bodies? Are there other alternatives?

Personal Response

1. Did you think that the situations Kepler found himself in were believable? Discuss.

2. How does Kepler's courage compare with Liza's in Ring-Rise Ring-Set?

3. Do you think Kepler was a more courageous person in Conshelf Ten or in Earthdark?
4. Would you have ended the story differently? If so, how?

5. How do you think Liza of Ring-Rise Ring-Set would have responded to Kepler's problem with the gillmen?

6. Discuss each of the following ideas with two other students. This book made me wish that; decide that; wonder about; believe that; feel that; and hope that.

7. Do you think it would be possible for this story to happen? Why or why not?

**Art Activities**

1. Construct a model of the Moon's surface, include the craters, seas and so on mentioned in the book.

2. Design a "wanted" poster for the gillman character in the book. Include:
   a) a drawing of the character
   b) physical description
   c) the character's misdeeds
   d) other information you feel is important
   e) the reward offered for his capture.

3. Make a collage representing major characters and events. Use pictures and words cut from magazines.

4. In groups of six. Construct models of the Conshelf colony including new features wherever you deem it necessary. In a sense, you have become the architects of this colony.

5. Create a huge undersea mural depicting various scenes from the book. You may also create mobiles of an underwater world and so transform your classroom into a kind of Conshelf Ten.

6. Using balsa wood, or other scraps, design both underwater travelling machines, as well as those vehicles that could take Kepler and other voyagers to the Moon and other planets.

7. Create a new sea creature that could be either friendly or otherwise. Use the papier mâché technique for making your creature.
8. Draw pictures of three objects which were important in the book. On a card attached to each, tell why the object was important to the story. These can be transformed into mobiles later on.

**Literary Awareness**

1. Select one character who has the qualities of a hero or heroine. List these qualities and tell why you think they are heroic?

2. How did Kepler change as a result of his experiences on Conshelf Ten?

3. List four of the main characters and give three examples of what each character learned or did not learn?

4. Explore other phrases that Hughes uses which are interesting or descriptive, e.g.,
   a) Earth as - the blue globe with its whip-cream swirls of cloud, p. 9
      - a shining silver disc, p. 9
   b) walking was a nightmare of wading through glue, p. 15
   c) island - spangled blueness of the Indian Ocean, p. 14
   d) the water was like soup, turbid with sand and mud, p. 58

**Related Literature**

Science Fiction by Monica Hughes. All her works are given in chronological order of writing:

- Earthdark - sequel to Crisis on Conshelf Ten
- The Tomorrow City
- Beyond the Dark River
- The Keeper of the Isis Light
- The Guardian of Isis - trilogy
- The Isis Pedlar
- Ring-Rise Ring-Set
- Beckoning Lights
- Space Trap
- Devil on My Back
- The Dream Catcher - sequel to Devil on My Back
Other books by Monica Hughes:

Gold-Fever Trail: A Klondike Adventure
Treasure of the Long Sault
Blaine's Way
The Ghost Dance Caper
Hunter in the Dark
My Name is Paula Popowich
Sandwriter

Short fiction by Monica Hughes:

"Dragon-Food Cake"
"The Iron-Barred Door"
"Lights Over Loon Lake"
"The Tutti-Frutti Tree"
"Zone of Silence"
"Chris and Sandy"
"The Ice Riders"
"The Singing Float"

Explorers All:


The story of the scientist who built and sailed the Kon Tiki.


An autobiography written about the experiences of the astronaut who was part of the team to travel to the moon.


A story about the astronomer and mathematician who invented the first telescope.

Born in England in 1809, Charles Darwin later visited the Galapagos Islands where he discovered life forms that substantiated his theory.


The early life, training, and career of the Russian woman cosmonaut.
Pre-Reading Activities

1. Introduction of the book by teacher or librarian

When a group of settlers from Earth land on the beautiful planet of Isis they arrive to a world completely unpeopled except by Olwen, Keeper of the Isis Light, and her protector, Guardian. Olwen's parents were once from Earth. After they died Olwen inherited their job of keeping the beacon light shining that signalled the presence of human beings. Olwen is nervous about what the newcomers will think of her and frustrated when Guardian insists that she put on a germ-free suit before she descends to the valley where they are camped. Down there she meets seventeen-year-old Mark London who quickly befriends the masked Olwen. Read the book to find out why she is so disguised, who the mysterious Guardian truly is, and other aspects about this far distant, beautiful planet called Isis.

2. Find the origins of these names which are encountered in the novel: Pegasus, Ra, Isis, Nantucket Whaler, Cutty Sark.

Values Clarification

1. Guardian tells Olwen, "A mirror can only show you what you see as yourself. It cannot tell you what another person sees" (p. 39). How important is physical appearance to one's self image, to being loved by others? Discuss.

2. Did Guardian ever really understand Olwen's mixed emotions regarding Mark?

3. Was it justified for Guardian to have genetically changed Olwen's appearance?

4. Was it far of Captain Tryon to dismiss Guardian to Olwen as "only a damned robot, after all" (p. 131). Discuss.
5. In the second novel of this trilogy titled The Guardian of Isis, Mark has become the leader and the role of women in society has deteriorated. What signs do we see in The Keeper of the Isis Light which could reflect why Mark could support such a change?

Art and Media Activities

1. As you reread the book, collect the necessary details for making a map. Draw and label a large map showing: the mountains, the valley, the disk antenna, the lighthouse mesa, the Cascades, the new settlement and as many of the other details as you can include.

2. Construct a diorama of Olwen's home. Include all the loving details that Guardian has added just for her and which fulfills her need for beauty.

3. Monica Hughes once worked as a theatrical costumier. Pretend you are the author and your task is to create costumes for the main characters of a play - The Keeper of the Isis Light, The Guardian of Isis, or The Isis Pedlar. Sketch or paint and label your work. Explain what is happening when the characters first appear in their costumes.

4. Put together a "photo album" for Olwen's life from the time of her birth to her decision to leave the lighthouse mesa at the novel's end. Caption and date all your illustrations.

5. Make a sock puppet to resemble Hobbit, Olwen's pet - as you imagine him to be. Write a monologue for your puppet in which he describes how his life has changed since the arrival of Pegasus II.

6. The novel is filled with details about the strange natural beauty of Upper Isis. Reread Chapter 8. List all the "unearthly" features that you can. Include as many as possible in a mural that Olwen would title "My Beloved Isis."

7. Do the same as #6 but add a contrasting scene - the same place during the storm. Rename this mural.

8. Paint a portrait of Olwen as you think she would really look.
9. Making a documentary. As settlers on Isis there are many perennial problems in being the first voyagers and pioneers on that planet. Select a problem that you, as a pioneer, have encountered and decide how you will go about stating the problem in film. Decide on the various places you want to film and then create a story board of these views. Later, you could transfer these ideas on to a filmstrip, on to slides or on to the film itself. Develop a commentary, dialogue between actors, music, and sound effects to contribute to the language of the film. The sound track should not dominate the film, filmstrip, or slide set you are creating, nor should it detract from the total effect.

10. Making a filmstrip. Work in groups, and use still photographs made into slides. Plan an outline and discuss your picture composition once you have decided on a story or theme. One good subject for this activity might be to produce the preview of the film that is about to be playing at a local theatre or of an imaginary movie titled The Keeper of the Isis Light. Here is an opportunity to do some persuasive visual communicating. What kinds of scenes should be included? What highlights in the movie should be shown? You might use live actors in a tableau-play presentation; a taped commentary with background music to suit the mood could also be included. If you are unable to make slides, photographs can be projected onto the screen by means of an opaque projector. The same activities could also be implemented for the two other books which complete the Isis trilogy: The Guardian of Isis and The Isis Pedlar.

Considering Alternatives

1. How would this story have been different if the main character had been a boy in the same circumstances as Olwen? Explain.

2. How might the story have changed had the emigration authorities back on Earth decided that someone else was to replace Olwen as Keeper of the Isis Light?

3. What might have occurred if the settlers had accidentally brought contaminating items with them from Earth?

4. What might have happened if the STC passenger vessel, Pegasus Two, had developed a malfunction prior to landing on Isis?
5. When Olwen finally realized how Mark really felt about her, what were her options for this relationship?

6. What do you think would have happened to Olwen if her parents had lived? How would her life have been different with regard to Guardian, Pegasus II?

7. What may the outcome have been had Olwen decided to retaliate when Captain Tryon's men killed her beloved pet, Hobbit?

**Awareness of Art**

1. Terry Oakes is the cover artist for this edition. Is his painting effective in that it makes you want to read the book? Why? Why not?

2. How does the use of colour create a mood? What feelings are reflected in this picture? How has the artist done this?

3. Comment on the view or angle as well as on the choice of subject for the cover.

4. Does the cover art enhance the reading? Would you have preferred not to have seen his interpretation of Isis? Why? Why not?

**Personal Response**

1. How far back into your childhood can you remember? Can you remember any incident or idea when you were four years old? three years old? younger? Describe or tell a friend your earliest memory.

2. Do you feel that your parents are like Olwen's "Guardian" in the way that they protect you, call for you, listen to you? Explain.

3. Have you ever had a really close, loving relationship with an animal of any kind? If it was a pet in your home describe how you might feel if it was suddenly taken away from you permanently?
4. On her birthday Olwen wishes for the impossible - that nothing would ever change her state of happiness. If it were possible to keep some things just the way they are forever, what would you want them to be?

5. Before the arrival of Pegasus II Olwen had all of Isis to herself. It must have been a very special feeling. Have you ever had a similar experience - when the family was away and you had the whole house to yourself. What did you do? How did you feel? Was it enjoyable?

6. Have you ever moved to a new school, or new neighborhood, a new city? Do you remember your first day at the new school? What were you: thinking about, hoping about, worrying about, happy about, sad about?

7. Is being alone the same as being lonely? Do people sometimes need to be alone?

8. Do you sometimes feel the same reactions as Olwen when she experienced various moods?

Writing

1. You have been asked to write this story as a movie script for television. You can choose to approach this issue in one of these ways:
   a) In a paragraph or a page, detail the obvious problems in carrying out this project.
   b) Think of solutions to the problem and write your answers in point form.
   c) Choose a particular scene and try to adapt it to a movie script format.

2. Guardian changed Olwen in ways that allowed her to adapt more freely to life on Isis. List the changes and decide how they were improvements. Then, as a further activity, choose four of your own human features and suggest imaginary physical improvements that would make you more adaptable to life in Saskatoon (or wherever you happen to live). Write of these in the form of a letter to a well known plastic surgeon specializing in genetic transformations requesting that you hope he will perform the necessary changes.
3. Write Olwen's diary entry for the night of her tenth birthday. Include events, feelings, and hopes for the future.

4. Write an epitaph for Olwen's beloved pet, Hobbit.

5. Compose the lyrics for a song about/for/to any of the main characters. Choose a title, a singer, and musicians and instruments for back up. Tell what type of music would best suit these lyrics.

6. The book begins with the line: "It was a day like any other day on Isis, and yet, when it was over, nothing would ever be the same again" (p. 1). Use this introductory line to write a story of your own. You may wish to change the phrase "on Isis" to suit your particular purpose.

7. Do you feel Guardian was a good parent? Write a report card for him as a parent. List subjects, attitude, etc.

Literary Awareness

1. Draw a time line plotting the significant events in Olwen's life from her tenth birthday to the end of the book. Did her character change during these events? If so, how?

2. The point of view switches back and forth in this story as the reader sees events through Olwen's eyes and then through the eyes of Mark. What does this technique achieve for the reader?

3. Are there one or more climaxes in this novel? Discuss.

4. There were many clues that the author used to tell us Olwen was different in appearance but most readers are still shocked and surprised to discover how different she really was. What were some of the clues? How has the author developed this state of shock?

5. What does the character Jody represent in this novel? What role does he play? How would leaving him out have changed this story?

6. Monica Hughes uses language in a variety of ways to describe different things in the novel. Here are some examples of her writing:
a) "Captain Jonas Tryon. Olwen said the name aloud. It had a good ring. It could be the name of the captain of a Nantucket whaler, or of a tea-clipper like the Cutty Sark" (p. 16).

b) "... She knew instinctively that his eyes would be blue ... mariner-blue, and far-seeing" (p. 17).

c) Around the bridge across Lost Creek he could see from up here the blackish-red stains of mud where the ground had been chewed up by the tracks of the crawlers. It looked as if Isis itself had been wounded and had bled" (p. 49).

d) "Olwen looked northwest, across the illimitable ranges of Isis. She felt as if she were at the prow of a great ship, cutting its way through a purplish-red swell, sailing on and on around the planet. She was at the same time the captain and the figure-head" (p. 63).

e) "Yet in some way that she could not understand she could see it all, she went on seeing it all, as if it were a series of photographs being flipped over in front of her eyes, to give a jerky imitation of life" (p. 63).

Find other examples in which Hughes uses simile, metaphor, irony and foreshadowing in this novel.

7. Do you notice any of the same ideas running through other of Hughes' books? What are some of these ideas and where do they occur in the stories? Concentrate on broad themes, philosophies of living. Here are some examples from The Keeper of the Isis Light:

a) "Stasis is death" (p. 9).

b) "A mirror can only show you what you see as yourself. It cannot tell you what another person sees" (p. 39).

c) "What a pity that the prejudices cannot be left behind when you go into star-drive" (p. 129).
Roles in the Publishing World

Choose one of the following roles and complete the activities for that position.

1. Editor: Write a proposal to publish or not to publish one of Monica Hughes' books. Include your assessment of the following points:
   a) Potential audience and projected sales for this book.
   b) Honesty - does the author represent both sides of the conflict completely and fairly?
   c) Realism - have all the necessary factual details been included to convince the readers that this could really be happening?

2. Copy writer: Write the inside dust jacket blurbs for the last book in the Isis trilogy titled The Isis Pedlar. Imagine the title, plot, and so on. Compose the summary blurb and then the back cover illustrator blurb. Study blurbs on different books first of all.

3. Artist: Create an original book jacket for any of Hughes' books. Keep in mind your intended audience and your goal - to attract attention without giving away too much of the story.

4. Marketing Director: Plan a whole sales campaign for any one of Monica Hughes' books. Study ads in Quill and Quire, Booklist, and School Library Journal to get ideas for publishing house advertisements. Include one advertisement for a reviewing periodical, one radio ad (write and tape), one billboard (sketch and color) and a list of personal appearance stops for the author, e.g., bookstores, schools, TV interview shows, etc.

Further Reading

Read the following articles and answer the questions provided.


a) Choose quotes from the two articles to establish the author's philosophy regarding the function of books and the author's responsibility.

b) Write a letter to Monica Hughes in which you refer to her philosophy and tell her how well she has achieved her goals in any particular novel. Be sure your evaluation has a sound base. We will send this letter to the author.

Creative Drama

Improvise the scene when Gareth Pendennis and his wife are told by Stellar Transport they have been assigned to Isis. Improvise their departure from Earth and their arrival on the planet.

Extension: In pairs: A & B. Dramatize the final scene between Guardian and Olwen's real mother. Remember that this agreement is at the source of all Guardian's future actions. Reverse roles.

2. In pairs: A & B. You are Jody's mother, and as A you dramatize your feelings towards Olwen; as B, after Jody is rescued from the storm. Reverse roles.

3. In groups of six, each bring an object which is exciting in a sensory way which can be associated with something found on the planet Isis. Do not reveal the object to anyone. Groups are blindfolded and the object passed around. By touching, try not only to be sensitive to what the object is but to its color and texture. Try to define what its possible use could be on the planet Isis. Discuss your findings in groups afterwards. Did your picture of the object match the actual object when it was revealed to you?

4. Get into groups of six or eight. Split into pairs, but at first work on your own. Think about a machine; think of some of the words that describe a machine - mechanical, stiff, monotonous, clockwork, unfeeling, automatic, regular,
passionless, jerky, unyielding. On your own, work out a very simple physical machine - like set of movements which you can repeat over and over again in the same way. Don't make them too forceful and vital or you'll be exhausted with the constant repetition. When the physical movements have been established, then develop a sequence of vocal sounds that match them. The vocal sounds should be an intrinsic part of your creation, enriching the quality of the machine you've devised physically. When the physical and the vocal patterns are synchronized and operating smoothly and easily for you, come together with your partner and make the two sequences, each dependent on the other, work as one machine. Now in your groups of eight create a group machine. You must work on at least three different levels (e.g., standing, kneeling, lying on the floor). You must, within the group, work at three different speeds. Each part of your group machine must work in unison and be dependent on the others. The leader will give each group a sound or a word which conveys the quality which that particular group machine has to communicate. Both the physical and vocal pattern must try and capture the kind of machine suggested by the sound or word.

Extension: Take the idea of a machine again. Explore and establish individual machine sounds and movements. This time the machine you've designed is much larger, more intricate and complex. There are a number of different things which happen in the creation of the end product. Know what these things are; know what your raw material is at the beginning and what it has changed to at the end. At any given moment know what process the raw material is undergoing. Send someone through the machine - beginning as raw material and emerging as finished product. When you start your machine, begin at one end and work through to the other so the interdependence of all sections can be seen.

Extension: As settlers on Isis you are building the homes in the valley. Create special machines to do the particular tasks that you assign them.

Extension: Groups of eight. Create your version of Guardian. Assign this robot machine particular jobs which are not necessarily those included in the book.
5. Form into pairs. A & B. A is a person - the other is their reflection in a mirror. Starting very slowly make the person and the reflection move as one. Go slowly at first and pay attention to detail. Work first in pairs, then as a whole group with half the class looking into the mirror and the other half as reflections.

Extension: A & B. A is Olwen and B her mirror image. Slowly and carefully try on the special birthday dress and sandals that Guardian designed. Remember the surprising music and the new way of walking. Reverse roles.

Extension: A & B. Discover the mirror as Olwen did. Then, discover yourself in the mirror for the very first time. Then reverse roles, B taking on A's part. Do this exercise as if there is a close-up hand mirror, and then with a full length mirror. Explore how the perspectives change as a result.

Extension: If you prefer, you may develop this mirror-image exercise in an imaginary mirror, without a partner. Share with a friend some of the feelings you had in discovering yourself in this mirror.

6. Dance drama: On Isis a terrible storm erupts, disturbing the beauty and peaceful existence of this planet for a time. Listen to the music "Cloudburst" from Grand Canyon Suite. In your mind react to the wind and rain of a storm. Then, individually, listen to the music again reacting physically to the wind and rain of this storm. The storm finally destroys you and then subsides.

Extension: In groups of eight. Create a movement sequence around the storm and its effects using "Cloudburst" as impetus.

7. Film and Dance drama. View the National Film Board of Canada's feature entitled Sky. As Olwen, or as Mark, while you are watching it, plan a sequence in which you are part of the film. You may want to rise and grow with the sun and be part of the clouds, part of the atmosphere surrounding Isis, or you may want to use the film as a background setting for your dance drama. Try to change the mood of your dance with the changes of mood in the film.
8. Mime: As settlers construct the buildings on Isis. You may wish first to explore the terrain and experiment moving about in an environment alien to that you had experienced on Earth.

9. Improvise the initial meeting between Olwen and the new colonists; between Olwen and Captain Jonas Tryon at the end of the story; between Olwen and Mark after his discovery of her different appearance.

Related Literature

   A boy learns the secret of his planetary civilization.

   This book contains nine science fiction stories written by Russian authors.

   Face to face with alien beings, men of earth must learn to think in new ways and come to terms with different cultures. For mature readers.

Discussion topics and related activities to these books and *The Keeper of the Isis Light*:

1. Speculations could be made regarding the possibility of living in a space colony. How would colonists control their environment? How would they communicate with other colonies? How would they travel between colonies? Consideration of scientific principles and the ways authors of science fiction stories have solved these problems are discussed.

2. Because many science fiction stories take place on other planets the possibilities of discovering an entirely new planet could be considered. The teacher or librarian could share excerpts from *Science 81* (March 1981) which suggest that astronomers are searching for a possible tenth planet
in our solar system. "Astronomers are looking beyond the known edge of the solar system for a planet estimated to be at least five billion miles from the sun or 50 times further away than Earth" (p. 6). After consideration of the possible characteristics of such a planet, any life forms that might be there, students write their own science fiction stories describing astronomers searching for the new planet, astronomers and/or space colonists travelling to the new planet, or space colonists living and working on the new planet.


3. The above discussion on astronomers searching for new planets could lead to a discussion about NASA's proposed 430-foot long orbiting space telescope described in the April 1981 issue of Science 81. Students are asked to consider what might be discovered if they could "peer seven times further into space than ever before, perhaps to the edge of the universe itself" (p. 10).


4. The latest discoveries about the characteristics of other planets and the sun, as discovered by Voyagers 1 and 2 explorations of the solar system and orbiting telescope, are used to stimulate discussion about science fiction and to consider how these characteristics would affect possible life on the planet or the development of space colonies. Two articles in the January/February 1981 issue of Science 81, Bruce Murray's "After Saturn, What?" and J. Kelly Beatty's "No Small Rapture" and Arthur C. Clarke's (1977) chapter titled "Mars and the Mind of Man" from his book The View from Serendip (other chapters are also useful), provide the background information to share with students. For example, the following quote by Bruce Murray could be a springboard for discussion about the environment on Mars: "Robots launched by the United States have changed the imaginary, Earth-like Mars of Percival Lowell into the detailed scientific reality of ancient volcanic mountains, vast basins, and water-cut channels much larger than any similar features on Earth" (p. 24). Arthur C. Clarke has suggested that "the biological frontier may very well move past Mars out to Jupiter, which
He thinks is where the action is. Carl Sagan has just gone on record as saying that Jupiter may be a more hospitable home for life than any other place, including Earth itself" (p. 129). Additional characteristics of Mars could be considered and compared with the environment of Jupiter and other environments developed in science fiction.


How Could Changes in Natural Environments or Events Affect the Future of Earth or Another Planet?

   People on earth discover a lost land in which prehistoric animals still live.

   The planet Pern must be protected from the spores that can destroy all living matter.

   Menolly studies under the masterharper of the planet Pern.

   Continued adventures on a distant planet.

   A thirteen-year-old survivor of a society that has experienced devastating destruction sets out to discover a civilization that supposedly lives underground.

   The air in a future earth time supports only dust and mutant animals and humans.
Discussion topics and related activities

1. Discuss what could happen on earth if prehistoric animals were discovered and begin to multiply rapidly. Consider competition for food, eating habits of various prehistoric animals, and human life. Consider what could happen if species that are now considered endangered were to begin to multiply rapidly. What changes in the environment might account for the reversal? What would be the consequences for other life?

2. Several science fiction books develop plots around consequences of changes in the earth because of contamination and over-population. Discuss this quote by Joan Stephenson Graf in her article "20th Century Arks" found in the March issue of Science 81.

Global 2000, a presidential report of the future; predicts that between 600,000 and one million plant and animal species will become extinct in 20 years as a result of the expansion of human populations and the exploration of natural resources. The loss of species, and the biological diversity they represent, is unrecoverable, and the consequences of these losses are impossible to predict.


Another article by Elizabeth Stark "You Can't See the Forest or the Trees" in April issue of Science 81 could be used to stimulate discussion. She paints a bleak picture:

The world's tropics will be bald and barren. With the forest canopy gone, surface temperatures will swing wildly, atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide will rise precipitously, and one million species will die. The aftermath of a nuclear war? Not quite. According to a grim report released by the U.S. Interagency Task Force on Tropical Forests, this is what much of the world's forests will look like in less than 50 years if devastation of woodlands continues.... What remains of our diminishing tropical woodlands will be gone within 70 years if deforestation in the Third World continues at its present rate.
Stark, E. (1981). You can't see the forest or the trees. Science 81, 2, 78.

Various environmental problems that are on earth today or problems that could develop due to litter from disabled space ships or other space travelling vehicles such as Voyager I may be considered. As students who have to contend with these problems you are to try and predict and provide various solutions to them.

The Influence of Machines, Computers, and Inventions


A boy becomes the tool of a terrifying computer.


In a twenty-first century world, machine creatures called Tripods control the earth.


The winners of an athletic contest have the privilege of serving the Masters, the Tripods.


Saboteurs undertake to destroy the Tripods. A new government is set up but dissenters cannot agree on a unified approach. Last volume in Christopher's trilogy.


A computer programmed by survivors helps rehabilitate a wasteland.

Two children seek to defeat a computer that is eliminating the weak and helpless in a computerized final solution.


A boy rebels against a mechanized universe of the future.

**Discussion Topics and Related Activities**

Jane Yolen (1986) in her introduction to *Dragons and Dreams: A Collection of New Fantasy and Science Fiction Stories* says:

Think of it. If children from the fifteenth century could be magically transported into our time, they would be positive that they had come upon a world filled with magic. They would find moving pictures or impenetrable screens, words spoken from afar carried across tiny wires, enormous metal birds that carry people undigested in their silver bellies, and small fires contained in boxes. We see such things everyday - televisions, airplanes, and cigarette lighters. Not sorcery at all, but science. We live comfortably with our everyday magic.

Who knows what marvels, what mysteries, and what powers might be harnessed in the centuries ahead? No one alive knows - but we can all imagine (pp. ix-x).


1. In light of this quotation you are to consider changes which have occurred in the world in the last one hundred years due to various inventions. Speculation could include a) a world without such inventions as computers, cars, space shuttles, microwave ovens, hovercrafts, telephones, and the like; b) a world in which these inventions
have become too powerful; c) a world which includes inventions that have not yet been imagined.

2. You are to design your versions of Guardian, or if preferred, your own robot models, or both. Describe the capabilities of your robot inventions, and contemplate what other worlds or earth might be like if robots were in abundance or if they became more powerful than their human inventors.

   Extension: Go to the library and find out more about Asimov's best known contribution to science fiction, his Three Laws of Robotics. Share your findings.

   Extension: Collect pictures and descriptions of robots found in films and books and, after sharing them with the class, display them attractively.

3. You are to make your own inventions, draw and create three-dimensional models of them, describe the purposes and advantages of these inventions, share them with other students, and speculate what might happen if your inventions became too powerful.
LIST OF REFERENCES


Wagner, B.J. (1985). Elevating the written word through the spoken: Dorothy Heathcote and a group of 9- to 13-year-olds as monks. Theory Into Practice, 24, 166-172.


