Themes in juvenile literature and their influence on intermediate and junior high readers

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THEMES IN JUVENILE LITERATURE AND
THEIR INFLUENCE ON INTERMEDIATE
AND JUNIOR HIGH READERS

by

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A RESEARCH PAPER
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION (READING SPECIALIST)
AT CARDINAL STRITCH COLLEGE

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
1973
This research paper has been
approved for the Graduate Committee
of the Cardinal Stritch College by

Sister Maria C. (Adviser)

Date Sept. 6, 1971
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to thank Sister Marie Colette Roy for her helpful direction, and all those who by encouragement and assistance made this paper possible.
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Educators have always been intrigued by the elements of aesthetic value which are apparent in some areas of children's literature. Efforts have been made in recent years to include more of these elements than in the past. Therefore, it seems that children's books today have more literary quality than at previous periods of development.

The investigator has been extremely interested in this fact. Being located in a small, resort town in northern Wisconsin, the question of the effect of these aesthetic themes on the students who become acquainted with them is of great interest to her. Students in this geographical vicinity are, in large measure, culturally deprived in aesthetic and social experiences. Their activities are mainly concerned with outdoor sports and enjoyment of the opportunities of their popular natural environment. Socially, they live only indirectly aware of the complexity of the American culture,
and so have a definite ghetto mentality.

**Needs of Society Today**

The investigator realizes that this situation is common not only among this particular segment of society, but that there are many other instances where there are degrees of deprivation on a social, emotional or aesthetic scale.

The question, then, is whether literature could afford a degree of compensation for these inadequacies. Children are coming into contact with literature in which actual themes do exist. Summers\(^1\) states that these themes, which are the basic ideas expressed by a work of literature, develop from the interplay of character and plot. They may be giving the reader a warning to lead a better or a different kind of life, or that life is profitable or unprofitable. Arbuthnot\(^2\) claims that children like stories with an adequate theme, strong enough to generate and support a lively plot. Could these themes then, serve as vicarious experiences for those readers who are so unfortunately deprived?

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Burton comments on the excellent quality of present children's literature in the following way:

Some of the best authors of modern times have chosen, out of sheer interest in children, to concentrate on writing children's literature. Furthermore, these excellent authors find important things to write about from the standpoint of children. They seek through their writings to introduce children to the society of their fellows—the problems, tensions, pressures, joys and satisfactions of everyday living. Their contribution, which includes some of the best literature of the day, is in great contrast with the verbal oatmeal for children once turned out by mere writing-hacks. ¹

Arbuthnot also describes the type of literature which is so necessary today in the following statement:

The difference between substantial literature with strong themes, or ideas that are morally sound, and those stories concocted to improve or uplift, is that the former tell an absorbing story with conflict, obstacles to be overcome, suspense, climax, a logical conclusion and distinguished style. It is among such books that we should look for genuine child guidance and not among plotless little narratives that mark the old and new didacticism.²

Today's educators realize that the concept of family life is changing radically. Because it is less structured, many children are extremely insecure. Some of them are seeking assurances from outside sources. It is for this reason


that the guidance programs of the schools are vital.

Because of the rapid advance of technology, man is faced with many more hours of leisure. Students, too, are finding it necessary to learn how to use this extra time purposefully and creatively. Learning to appreciate aesthetic experiences is essential for self-fulfillment and it is possible to seek this appreciation in literature, as Russell points out:

We know that in books there is a storehouse of ideas, unmatched by all the movies and TV of all times. We know that, in reading, a child can go at his own pace, can repeat, can think over what he is reading undisturbed by the "hard sell" of commercialism. Because he can go at his own pace and occasionally dream over a book, it may mean more in his inner life.¹

Far too many students are taking the easy way out by spending long hours before TV or by engaging in other useless activities. Lacy shows how the television media has control of the American public in the following comment:

Billions of man-hours are spent monthly before TV screens, and one of the major expenditures of our entire economy is the manufacture, distribution and service of TV sets and the production, and broadcast of TV programs. The typical American spends half of his leisure hours immersed in television, an experience unique in this

country, which has about four-fifths of all the world's receivers.¹

Most disastrous to any latitude of thinking is the ghetto mentality among so many. Adults are usually accused of this narrow-mindedness. However, it is often reflected in the attitudes of their children. Young people who do not take interest in problems outside their "own world," who fail to understand ideas foreign to their own, or who aggressively force their prejudiced opinions on others, need direction to broaden their outlooks.

Purpose and Scope

It is the investigator's belief that teachers have a great responsibility to try to provide solutions to these vast problems. Literature programs do exist in our schools today. Do they contain materials with themes useful in the guidance of students in these areas? If so, what are these themes, how are they developed in literature, and are they adaptable to the guidance programs so desperately needed by today's youth?

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a number of works of juvenile literature in order to determine the theme

content and the manner in which this is achieved, with possible effects on the reader. Also, the investigator intended to review past studies and research in order to substantiate her conclusions.

This study was confined to literature which appeals to lower intermediate through junior high students. The investigator believes that it is more probable that themes can be traced at these levels and, therefore, their use will have more tangible results. The study was limited to books published between 1967 and 1971.
CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Many authors have addressed themselves to the effects of children's literature upon young readers. The writer has chosen to summarize the more relevant contributions on the subject as it relates to her topic.

Effects of Literature

Russell has stressed the need for children's literature to meet the needs of the young reader:

Reading will become important to children only if it meets some of their deepest needs. In the years ahead, reading can keep its present place in the school curriculum only if it helps the individual in some of his important personal problems.¹

However, the process by which literature affects a child should not be oversimplified, for the child is not simply a plastic creature, easily changed by what he reads.²

The problems of children may seem very simple to adults, but

¹Russell, "Reading for Effective Personal Living," p. 12.
children need a chance to talk about the things that are troubling them. Many times literature is the right key which unlocks hidden and half-formed thoughts which, when expressed, can help children understand their lives a little better.1

Personal Development Through Literature

Fostering a child's personal development through experience in literature is an exciting opportunity and a great teacher responsibility. Those who undertake the task must provide a situation in which children and books can easily get together.2 Russell is optimistic about the task when he says, "With the wide resources available today, an interested teacher can match child and book; somewhere there are stories which mean a lot in the inner life of each boy and girl in your class.3 In a study by Krueger4 seventy percent of


the responses indicated that the students felt books do affect their lives and the way they think and act.

No two readers ever bring to the printed page the same backgrounds of experience, nor do they take from it the same meanings or feelings. Each reader brings to his reading his own purposes, concerns, tastes, skills and attitudes. He has his own unique dreams, desires and deliberations. And, through his reading of literature, he seeks the satisfactions that his present self requires. These satisfactions may include escape, information, adventure, reassurance, beauty, laughter, identification and entertainment in various combinations.¹

While books are not a substitute for living, they can add immeasurably to its richness. When life is absorbing, books can enhance our sense of its significance. When life is difficult, they can provide a refreshing release from the trouble and insight into our problem.² It is Arbuthnot's contention that books aid in child development:

Certain basic needs are common to most peoples and most times. A child's needs are at first intensely and narrowly personal, but, as he matures, they broaden and become more generally socialized. Struggling to satisfy his

¹Jacobs, "Literature," p. 73.

²Arbuthnot, Children and Books, p. 2.
needs, the child is forever seeking to maintain the precarious balance between personal happiness and social approval, and that is no easy task. Books can help him, directly or indirectly.¹

Fostering Social Sensitivity Through Literature

Books can help young people become more aware of the social problems of the world around them and of the problems of other peoples not in their own immediate sphere. Studies clearly indicate that, if given proper encouragement, the young will become increasingly sensitive to the needs and problems of others not immediately associated with them.² Results of a study by Fisher indicated that reading, particularly that which was reinforced by discussion, changed the attitudes of a group of fifth graders toward the Indian.

Heaton points out the school's responsibility in meeting the social problems of the day:

Today schools are called upon to meet important demands: What can we do to further understanding of our international problems? How can schools strike at juvenile

¹Ibid., pp. 2-3.


delinquency? In what ways can teachers develop adequate programs for character development? How can books and reading help to restore spiritual value in America? When we call it "education for social sensitivity," we stress the need for awareness of feelings, and the need to know how other people react to the situation in which they find themselves. We think of the socially mature adult as being able to sense the nuances of situations, as being perceptive of the ways in which feelings affect the lives of people, and being responsive to the morale factors which result from understanding many kinds of problems.¹

There are two goals which need to be included in any program to increase understanding of human relations: the appreciation of common needs and values, and sensitivity to the differences between people, their opportunities, cultural values and expectations.²

Pilgrim³ points out that man must come to the realization that he is "his brother's keeper" because what affects one segment of our society will affect everyone else. In fact, if our society is to survive, young people must be brought face to face with the problems of their generation and the world. Literature will help them to gain understanding

²Ibid., p. 2.
³Pilgrim and McAllister, Books, Young People, and Reading Guidance, p. 100.
of other people, those across the street and those across the ocean.

In a study carried out by Shirley\(^1\) the introspective and retrospective reports of 420 adolescents confirmed that reading influences concepts, attitudes and behavior.

Ciancio\(lo\) believes that books which are used to foster cosmopolitan sensitivity and growth should be of the finest quality:

Books that are to be used to change other people should exemplify good literature. The characters of the books should be lifelike and complete—yet individual entities. Regional, racial, religious or nationality groups should be pictured in an atmosphere which is accurate, showing the tradition and customs and the origination of each.\(^2\)

Solving Emotional Problems Through Literature

Some of the sources of emotional stress in the lives of children stem from the normal process of growing up. Such things as operations, childhood diseases, moving to new neighborhoods, tension between parents, war anxieties are things that happen or are done to the child.\(^3\)


\(\text{\textsuperscript{2}}\) Ciancio\(lo\), "Children's Literature," p. 901.

\(\text{\textsuperscript{3}}\) Ibid., p. 897.
It is possible to help him face and solve his own actual problems and pressures by seeing how a similar experience was met by a book personality. Cianciolo states further, "Through recognition of a problem and its solution in literature the individual gains new insights into his own problem and presumably is then able to take a step toward solving it."¹

In some instances the young reader may be able to make satisfactory adjustments when a problem eventually arises in his own life because he previously encountered a similar one in literature and saw how it was solved.

Heaton emphasizes the importance of emotions in the total development of children:

Any education which vitally affects human relations must touch not only the mind but the heart. It must delve into attitudes, appreciations, and values. It must give opportunity to know how the impact of fear, hostility, envy, despair, hope and love affects people. The emotional life of the students themselves is important since they cannot develop warmth and friendliness for others unless they themselves have experienced acceptance and security. People and their relationships and feelings are at the core of such a program. But how can wide experience with many kinds of people be fostered within the four walls of the school room? How can learning be fostered within the four walls of the average classroom?²

The answers to these last questions can well lie

¹Ibid., p. 897.
²Heaton and Lewis, Reading Ladders, p. 3.
within the realm of an adequate literature program.

Essentially we are all lonely and fearful. Adults have learned to put on a brave face. Young people have not mastered this art, so they must be helped through books and stories in which characters are facing similar loneliness and fears. Children are often insecure, fearful of making a mistake, not being accepted by their peers, afraid they don't look right or that family finances won't hold out.¹ Good literature is available to help them see that others are facing the same fears and doubts. And, as Larrick suggests, "When a youngster meets someone with the same difficulty in real life or in a book -- he may take note. And if that other person triumphs in spite of his problem, the child can begin to hope."²

Kilburn concluded from her study that, "Biographical books can be found which utilize principles of insight, identification, and catharsis, and, therefore, become tools in the


technique of bibliotheraphy.¹

Universal is the human need to love and to be loved. The family serves as the first teacher of the laws of affectionate relationships. Family patterns not only develop a child's sense of security but also determine his whole approach to other people.² For the child whose own family leaves much to be desired, close-knit family relationships depicted in literature can be models in his search for security.

Books should be able to help a child feel he is a part of the overall doings of men. They should make a reader sense that he is a part of life and an essential part of it. A good book respects a child's individuality and his capacity to become. A child is becoming a person but is not yet all that he will become. A child is growing emotionally and learning to cope with all the forces that play on his personality. Literature can help in the process.³


²Arbuthnot, Children and Books, p. 6.

The value of literature is that it enables a child to experience vicariously all the human emotions which promote better understanding. Smith comments as follows:

So literature can transplant us to another world of another period of time; it can create an emotional situation, a mood or a tone, a feeling. We experience sadness, love, joy, disgust, hatred, sympathy. This we do through empathy or ability to project ourselves into the situation and live within the consciousness of the characters created by the author.\(^1\)

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**Satisfying Aesthetic Needs Through Literature**

The need for aesthetic satisfaction is clearly defined by Arbuthnot:

There is another human need that seems curiously at odds with man's more utilitarian search for security and achievement. It is the need to adorn, to make beautiful, and to enjoy beauty. The need to adorn, begins primitively with the enjoyment of ornaments for self-glorification. With many people, this remains a major source of satisfaction. For others, the aesthetic sense expands rapidly beyond the purely personal to include expressions of the wonder and joy of life in arts--music, dancing, painting, sculpture and literature.

Our aesthetic sense is best satisfied by the art which, using new patterns, reveals life to us with fresh significance. We respond both to the pattern and to the sense of wholeness or completeness that art gives us. Our response is often emotional rather than intellectual or, more frequently, it is both. We call this feeling aesthetic satisfaction, the satisfaction of our hunger for harmony and beauty. Good reading can help every young human begin to understand and

satisfy these basic needs vicariously if not in reality.¹

Smith states, "The field of literature, then, belongs in the creative arts for the aesthetic values it has."² The difference between the two types of reading is given by Russell:

The whole process of reading has two sides: the cognitive or knowing aspects of reading and the responsive or appreciative aspects of reading. These may be labeled reading as thinking and reading as creating. Here we are interested in the latter -- that of appreciative response in reading. It may be called creative thinking growing out of reading.³

Young people need our help in developing an aesthetic appreciation and books can help them in their need to experience the aesthetic. Although the lift of the spirit which comes with real aesthetic experiences is not commonly sought by many young people today, they still need to respond to beauty and will do so when the opportunity is offered.⁴

Particularly in this age of violence, with children being subjected to close-ups of crime and brutality on TV and in movies, we need to develop in children little areas of

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²Smith, *Creative Teaching*, p. 93.


peace, sensitivity to beauty and to the possible richness of
life. Children must find hope, wonder, a sense of the beauty
and glory of life in the books which they read before they can
find these realities in themselves.  

1Arbuthnot, "Literature," p. 63.

2Karl, From Childhood to Childhood, p. 8.
CHAPTER III

THEMES IN JUVENILE LITERATURE

Object of Study

The object of this study was to identify books which demonstrate definite themes that will aid in young readers' development -- socially, emotionally and aesthetically. The reading level was limited to upper intermediate through junior high.

Selection of Books

The children's literature section of five libraries was searched for books of fiction with a publication date from 1967 through 1971. The libraries included Cardinal Stritch College, Sisters of St. Francis Convent, St. Sebastian's School, St. Veronica's School, and Tippecanoe Public Library, all of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Approximately 200 books were reviewed personally by the writer and checked against professional library review journals to appraise the literary value of the books. Sources of reviews included Book Review Digest, Children's Catalog, The Horn Book Magazine, Junior High School
Catalog, Library Journal, and Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books. Books that did not receive a favorable review from at least one of the sources were eliminated from the study. In the few instances where no professional review was available, the writer relied on the opinion of librarians, the worth of the author's previous works, and her own personal judgment as to whether she should include these titles in the study.

Careful reading of the selected books uncovered definite themes. These themes were grouped for presentation, as aids in filling the readers' social, emotional and aesthetic needs. In the next section the numbers given in parentheses refer the reader to the full bibliography of the book in the list of Children's Books, on page 72.

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Themes Fostering Social Sensitivity

Effects of prejudice. -- The dog Sounder is a symbol of silent suffering and determination to go on accepting abuse at the hands of those who hate the Southern Negro family. The father, a sharecropper, is forced to steal to feed his family. His punishment at the "hands of justice" and his ruined life and body testify to the evils of prejudice. The mother waits resignedly for his release from prison but, "As the boy grew older, he could not match his mother's patience. 'You must learn to lose, child. The Lord teaches the old to lose. The young don't know how to learn it.'" Sounder. (3)

Moses Waters, a black school teacher in the South, shares his wisdom and talents with his white friends only to see them persecuted because of him. His pupils are tormented and one of them killed by whites. Finally, he meets his death at their hands. Two of his friends are discussing the reaction of the community to Moses: "Enoch was always ready with a sermon. So now he launched unto one: 'This world is full of hunger. There's soul-hunger, greed-hunger, and hate-hunger. If a man has soul-hunger, he feeds his soul; if he has greed-hunger, he feeds only his head; if he has hate-hunger, he eats up his own soul and carries a bitter taste in his mouth for the rest of his life. The county's got an overdose of
hate-hunger." *Sour Land.* (4)

Young John's father was shot and crippled by a policeman for not getting off a public bus. Years later, sixteen-year-old John arrives in Harlem from Alabama to earn money towards his education to be a lawyer. He finds life in the North even more confusing than in the South. He and his friend discuss it. "'I understand how you feel.' John said aloud. 'It's even worse down South. Up here they don't kill you.' 'There's many ways of killing,' Mark said." Later in defense of his uncle, John spoke out, "So where does a man go in life, Mark?...He goes as far as life will let him, I think. He may be a bellman or a carpenter, or a Pullman porter. He may own a store or be President of the United States. The way I see it, most people want to be the best they can. They're trying to respect themselves: and nobody has the right to tear them down for trying." *Harlem Summer.* (83)

A young boy, adopted by an Indian tribe but rejected by them because of racial difference, is forced to leave the only place he can call home. He spends his most vital years in slavery and is finally almost unable to accept the one significant gesture of friendship given to him upon his escape from bondage. The brutality of prejudice is evident in these
words concerning Beric: "There was an ache in his stomach that was not hunger -- he would be free to run with the pack now, and yet he felt all the desolation of an outcast. He was afraid because he had come face to face with things that he had never dreamed of, and the sure foundations of his world had shifted under his feet." Outcast. (79)

A black girl whose parents are dead must go to live nine months with the Mallory's, a white family who try to make her feel welcome. But fear of herself and others, which has been built up in the past, prevents a happy adjustment and leads to strange events. Finally, with Mrs. Mallory's help, she is able to accept concern for herself, and the family learns to see the difference between acceptance and love. Thinking about her own position as a black person: "Things would never change for me. Time would go by and things would never change all by themselves. I would always be black." Later she recognizes that fear goes under many guises: "...it seemed only a short time before that I had called my fear by different names, refusing to recognize it for what it was. Sometimes I called it anger and sometimes I called it hate and sometimes I called it envy and there once had been a time when I'd called it love. Now I didn't call it anything but fear." The Almost Year. (70)
The effects of racism in a small town and particularly in the lives of two girls is depicted here. Tollie, the black girl, and Slocum are the best of friends until at the age of twelve they realize their difference in color. Their friendship, now clouded with tension and hostility, is further tested when they disagree about the rightness of militant Howard Jackson's attack on a white storekeeper. After a frightful experience in the mysterious swamp, the Peppersalt Land, the Girls are drawn closer together and a deeper understanding exists in their relationship. The Peppersalt Land. (38)

Loyalties in time of war. -- In this satire on Russian military life, Ivanov refuses to obey an order to shoot into a group of villagers protecting their crops. The death penalty is circumvented by reassigning the rebel to his home in the mountains. Commenting on his order, the officer vindicates himself. "My days would be quite serene. I am upheld by the knowledge that I am fulfilling the duties of an officer in his Majesty's Army. I would regret the day's work but, it would not trouble me." Ivanov Seven. (49)

Set in Roman Britain, this novel tells of the events surrounding the ill-fated revolt of the Iceni, under Queen Boadicea, against their Roman masters. The story is told from the viewpoint of Marcus, a young Roman tribune, who,
because of growing sympathy with the Celtic cause, feels a divided loyalty during the conflict. Realizing the havoc wrought by war in terms of human dignity, Marcus says: "Now I have seen enough of war. There is no place in the ninth legion for such as I am. I have lost all heart for killing."

The Queen's Brooch. (81)

Hans, part of the German occupation in France, becomes a friend of the villagers. When ordered to execute six villagers to repay the murder of one German officer, Hans ponders: "To shoot, to kill a friend. In a way, they were all friends. But they were also enemies of his country, and he was in charge at Nogent-Plage. He represented the Third Reich for the moment. What choice did he have? He was responsible for the safety of his men. There were the orders. ...First, of course, comes one's country." At his trial after the war: "No, I did not kill the hostages. I did not kill them because the order so offended my conscience. And when conscience and the state conflict, the conscience must take precedence. But if I did not obey this order, I perhaps obeyed others I should not obey. We were all guilty. Hence we must pay the price. I am ready." His Enemy, His Friend. (82)

Deprivation. -- Through the son of a rather well-to-do business man, the reader is acquainted with Eddie, son of
a Jewish teacher whose scrupulosity regarding his direct responsibility for the poor brings undue hardship and suffering to his own family. Eddie was expected to support the family. Effects of an accident and poor health shorten his life -- and its loss is a lasting symbol of dedication to a cause at the expense of causes which are themselves valuable. From the introduction: "The children of the poor and troubled rarely do come to full growth; like forced fruit, they blossom too early and wither before they ripen." Our Eddie. (48)

David Moore and his family must move to California because of the many accidents and the danger in the coal mines where David's father works. His father's plight: "If we move out of the mountains, what could I do? I'm not a carpenter or a plumber or a bricklayer or a clerk. I am a miner. All I know is mining. I've been a miner since I was fourteen-years-old." Journey to Jericho. (66)

James lives with his three aunts because his mother left him after his dad deserted them. He escapes the world he lives in to one of imagination and fancy. Hiding in a deserted house to be alone, he is found by three hoodlum boys who force him into their illegal business of dog-napping. After freeing the dogs, he escapes and goes home to find his
mother. "They couldn't tell what he was really thinking. They could make him go where they wanted and they could scare him. But they couldn't get inside his head where his thoughts were. Maybe he'd have a great thought that would show him how he could get home." *How Many Miles to Babylon.* (24)

The effects of poverty can be seen in this life of Guido, a twelve-year-old beggar in Naples. He learns to steal and lie in order to survive. But he always remembers what his dead mother had told him about being kind and strong. Gradually he begins to realize the emptiness of his life and he tells his friend, "One must not waste oneself with hate."

*The Little Fishes.* (40)

Five children, with their blind father and unstable stepmother, give up their bit of mountainside in Goose Elk for life in Chicago. The stepmother soon deserts them. When fourteen-year-old Marvella is forced to quit her job in a pawnshop, she joins her younger brother in purse-snatching. Even stealing is better than hunger, she decides. The minosa tree, a symbol of simple beauty, is always most prominent in their vision. Eventually they return to their shack in the hills and Marvella reflects: "They were home. That much had been accomplished. Now if they died of starvation, at least they'd do it in their own home, on their own land."
Chicago had been a bad, bad mistake. It would take forever to forget. Maybe they wouldn't ever. She wouldn't. That terrible place." The Mimosa Tree. (11)

A Negro boy, Jim, is to be moved from an old rundown school to an even older one. His widowed mother decides the time has come for neighborhood parents to take a stand. This results in the children being bussed across the city to a new, well-equipped school. The story gives an honest picture of the appalling situations that can be encountered in big-city ghetto schools. Dead End School. (12)

The Cats play football together and roam the streets of their neighborhood, a Liverpool slum, driven by poverty and hunger. Their leader, Rocky O'Rourke, works hard to turn them into apprentice thieves; they practice for the "big job" by breaking into an empty shop and burglarizing the home of an old lady. The toughness and grimness of slum life is not exaggerated but depicted with honesty and humor. Rocky looks forward to the day his brother, Joey, will be released from prison. But it is partly Rocky's own nature and partly the influence of one or two people who are concerned for him that help Rocky avert the danger of a future tied to Joey. The Liverpool Cats. (72)

Minty Lou was a very fortunate, happy, little black
girl until her mother and father were tragically killed in a freak accident. In the aftermath the little girl is passed from one relative to another. She is an unwelcome burden to homes where money is short and hope for the future nonexistent. Welfare workers hear of her unkind treatment and arrange for her to live with her grandparents in Cambridge. In spite of their poverty, there is hope that here, at least, she will find a little care and love. *Come By Here.* (15)

**Rejection of present society.** -- Rion Fletcher, a recent high school graduate, has a serious car accident. In the hospital he tells his story to a sympathetic lawyer, -- his failures, his concerns, his relations with his brother, his brother's girl and his parents. In the end Rion leaves home, even though his parents are happy that charges against him were dropped and hope that things might be always as they "were." Rion, who wants to see change in his own life, points to bigger revolutions, too, it seems: "I want more than Saturday night and a few hands of penny ante. If I could only see some little thing get done -- one lousy old rule changed. ...Somebody's got to make a dent in it, so a few people like me would get clued in before it's too late. ...Maybe I'll get back to the books someday. ...But if they're going to gas around for years and get nowhere except to mix me up, forget it. There's other ways to get ahead.
Or places where I could fit -- there must be someplace."

**Count Me Gone.** (50)

A family moves to Ohio since the father has a teaching position there. He buys a large estate which is mysterious. It had been the possession of the Dies Drear family and is intricately equipped to help slaves escape. Mystery surrounds the old former slave, Pluto, who has guarded the "treasure" from outsiders for many years. Thomas, a thirteen-year-old son, becomes very involved in the intrigue and uncovers the truth. Thomas is impatient with society's shortcomings:

"'I'm tired of everything being always just the same,' Thomas couldn't help saying. He felt sudden relief, as though somewhere inside him he had let fly a rock. 'Always colored churches! Always white churches somewhere hidden! Why is it folks never get together?'" **The House of Dies Drear.** (32)

Brenda has become obsessed with a horse staked in the field of an abandoned estate. The influential Bassetts have left their crippled race horse to die. Rescuing the horse will incur the wrath of the owners and cause trouble for all concerned. Brenda pleads her cause: "Do you know what I thought about all night? ...I thought about a horse that can't walk and about people like you and father, who say what a shame, yet do nothing. And I thought about those who care
about what's happening in South Africa and Vietnam, who write letters to newspapers and organize protests and wave banners, caring about events they can't influence because they're safe, they can't do more than protest. ...All the way a voice kept saying, forget it, Fatso, be like others. It's somebody else's responsibility. It's nothing to do with you." Brenda's father is convinced: "We've got to do it...not because of the horse, not because of Brenda even. Because, if we don't if we let him die up there, this family...something will happen to this family. It'll be there like a shadow." Come Down the Mountain. (75)

The son of a Spanish nobleman, Luis, is in the care of an uncle. He runs away and disguises himself as an attendant in the army until his identity is uncovered by Alvarad. Luis's respect for this man becomes less as he serves under him. He realizes that Alvarad is most cruel to the Indians. His own attitude toward the Indians changes and he resigns his position in the army just when he is eligible for a promotion. The Quetzal is a beautiful bird captured by Luis. He finally realizes it can only be truly beautiful when set free. He too must be free. The Quetzal Feather. (21)

Seventeen-year-old Wendy confronts her family with her case for freedom and the need to find herself and reality.
She ends up on Beacon Hill in Boston where many other young people have come to look for the intangible meanings they can't find in school or at home. Communal living, crash pads and pot are part of Wendy's unforgettable experience. Disillusioned, she returns home and there is a suggestion that there might still be hope in the way of life she had rejected. When Peter has come to the point of decision, he advises her: "Your home may not be ideal. Sure you want to change things, but isn't that the place to begin to work things out? Sure you can get along with people by drifting with them. When you're all drifting on a sea of pot, it's gorgeously congenial. Great fun. No sweat. ...the point in life is to live it thoroughly, use it -- not escape from it." The Peter Pan Bag. (52)

Claudia, feeling herself a misfit in the suburb where her parents live, throws off their smothering influences and runs away from home. "... but there seemed to be no meaning to life itself. There must be more to it than buying things (my mother), than working and paying bills (my father), than thinking of only yourself and having a good time (my brother), than being absolutely alone and useless (me)." In East Village, Claudia views the scene with wry humor as she searches for a way to be her essential self without sham. She meets a nice
boy, finds an apartment, gets a job and is somewhat reconciled to her parents across the generation gap. Though her problems are not clearly solved, Claudia could say, "My apartment, my job, my boyfriend, my neighborhood. For once I knew where I was. Not all the clothes, nor furniture, nor cars, nor maids, nor anything had ever made me feel so rich." *Claudia, Where Are You?* (13)

In this monologue, Byron, a teenager, takes Charlie, a five-year-old genius, under his wing. Charlie thinks him wonderful. When unhappiness comes to Charlie in later childhood, he turns to Byron who now has a strong sense of values and commitment. "I happen to think that we're better than any other people in the world, and other people are still looking to us for answers. And maybe we're not asking ourselves questions. Because there is something wrong in this country; something got derailed and I want to find out why. And what are we afraid of? I've got to learn about this country I live in." *Don't Play Dead Before You Have To.* (95)

Among all the hang-ups enumerated in this story, Jeremy's seems the most important. He has a conscience-shaking decision to make about registering for the draft. Can his country make him kill? At school, with friends, with girls, facing the draft, Jeremy is in the process of finding out who he is. While
there are no answers, the reader will sympathize with the picture of youth, confused and questioning. I'm Really Dragged but Nothing Gets Me Down. (42)

Two teenagers, John and Lorraine, are dissatisfied with school, and home life. As John expressed it: "I just don't want to wear a suit every day and carry an attache case and ride a subway. I want to be ME. Just me. Not a phony in a crowd." Meeting a strange old gentleman, brings excitement into their lives. Pigman, as they call him, views life in a uniquely calm way. Their friendship grows and becomes beautiful even though John and Lorraine cannot understand it very well. Pigman's senility may be a symbolic return to youthful honesty and idealism. While Pigman is ill in the hospital, John and Lorraine stage a wild party in his home. Pigman's return in the midst of the chaos leaves him sad and distant from the young people. Soon after, he dies and John realizes that he had really intruded on this man's privacy: "We had trespassed too -- been where we didn't belong, and we were being punished for it. Mr. Pignati had paid with his life. But when he died, something in us had died as well."

The Pigman. (100)

Effects of sexual freedom and drugs. -- This story depicts love relationships between two couples in high school.
Liz and Sean become intimate, which leads to pregnancy, and finally abortion for Liz. Because she hemorrhages, Liz's family finds out the truth and eventually her graduation is postponed. Maggie and Dennis have a different relationship and the story ends with their graduating and promising to get together sometime. Liz does not openly admit her unhappiness is a result of sexual freedom but it comes through in Maggie's reactions. *My Darling, My Hamburger.* (99)

Summer turns into a nightmare for Jim when his brother, Kevin, comes home from college. Kevin, drastically changed, has become a person full of doubts and urgent needs — one of which is LSD. As the tale develops, Jim's confusion is compounded and he does his best to help Kevin. The despair of the drug scene is conveyed without romance and sensation. It is all frankly recorded, to the final horror of Kevin's freaking out and the shaky beginning of his redemption. *Tuned Out.* (96)

*Understanding other cultures.* — The Eskimo Akayak and his grandfather set out on a long and difficult journey. The old man is dying and wants to see his brother once more. When their cache of food is stolen by a bear, they are forced to go into the mountains. The journey becomes a struggle for survival against cold and hunger. It reflects the life of
the Eskimo fighting to live in his icy homeland. Akavak. (47)

This is the story of a Burmese boy, Aung Khin. It begins with the day of his Shinbyu, when he gives up his name -- his very self -- to become Ariya. As a koyin in the monastery, he learns the precepts of Buddha and then returns to the village, on the way to being himself and a man. Orange-robed Boy. (28)

Themes Solving Emotional Problems

Understanding and accepting self and others. -- After anticipating the family's outing to their summer home on Long Island, Fredricka finds everyone is different -- her parents and even David, her romance from the previous summer. The intrusion of an aunt threatens the family's harmony. Slowly, Freddy is able to accept her new understanding of the emotions and imperfections of the adults in her family in an honest and natural way. She learns compassion for the rebel aunt and a deeper love for her remote, undemanding artist-mother.

Where Does the Summer Go? (29)

About to graduate from eighth grade and very big for her age, Veronica plays the part of a bully. Her biggest enemy is Peter, who constantly taunts her and outwits her when she seeks revenge. Finally, by accident, she finds that it is in simply being a girl that she can make Peter feel completely
helpless. At last she begins to change a little -- and, surprisingly, she looks at her new self with some admiration in the end. "Something had happened today that had never happened before. Somebody had taken her part in a fight. Somebody had rescued her. Why? ...And why was she feeling so happy? She had been defeated and yet, she was the winner. She knew she was the winner, and suddenly she knew why. The weapon she had been searching for was one she had possessed all along. ...She was a girl, and it was a mighty thing being a girl." Veronica Ganz. (71)

In 1815, Malinda's sea captain father leaves her at Fort Ross, a Russian fur trapping and trading colony near San Francisco, to recover from their voyage around the Horn. Since there are no other white women there, she is forced to live with the Indian wife of one of the Russians. Remembering only what she heard of massacres from her relatives back East, sixteen-year-old Malinda is terrified. Gradually, she makes friends with the Indians and through all her experiences at the fort, matures and learns to accept responsibility as a woman. Courage in Her Hands. (63)

These are the stories that Mama Luka tells Lee Edward when she cares for him after school. In them Jahdu learns of his magic powers, makes mischief, outwits trouble and, last of all, settles for becoming himself, after trying a number of
things like being a building. He is happy and proud being who and what he is. And Lee Edward comes to understand, "There is pride in his face that is always the same. He, Lee Edward, could have pride and power, too." *The Time-Ago Tales of Jahdu.* (33)

Howie Coleman, a sort of suffering "Everyteen," strives for the affection of an all too fallible and often absent father, broods over growing up in a Jewish household in a Gentile community to which his family has moved, and goes to humiliating lengths to win the friendship of other boys. A game of post office spells the beginning of the end of Howie's favorite escape -- daydreaming about saving the life of Holly Warner. Expelled from school for drawing a mildly raunchy, typical high-school-boy cartoon and then, caught red-handed stealing from a novelty store, Howie, nevertheless, achieves in his disgrace an essential sense of indulgence toward the flaws of his family and the world. *Blood for Holly Warner.* (35)

Claudia, feeling unappreciated, systematically plans to run away with her brother, because he had saved money which they would need. They take up residence in the art museum where they live day and night until Claudia is obsessed with the history of the marble angel, a new addition to the
museum. She follows her clues to Mrs. Frankweiler's house and comes to learn that true individuality is interior. From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. (53)

Charlie is an eleventh-grade boy in the slums whose parents are so poor that he must skip school regularly to earn money shining shoes. His favorite teacher, Mr. Toia, sees great promise in Charlie -- writing talent, maybe someday a doctor -- but he must go to school. Charlie sees only the need for money. Teaming up with his favorite uncle, he invests his savings in a deal which ends in a fiasco. Charlie is left disillusioned, but learns to see his uncle in the pathetic way he must be recognized. Mr. Toia tells him: "No, Charlie. He left because he was ashamed. He couldn't face you. If you knew more about him, you'd find that he's been doing things like this all his life -- hoping for a strike. The big win, you know? But it never happened. Wherever he is, he's got nickels in his pocket and tears in his eyes. He's done you a favor. He taught you that some people are to love and some are to invest in. And he ran the Dog-town movie fast for you, so that you could see what it's like to be a dropout." The Nitty Gritty. (7)

After Artie's family moves to Florida, he must adjust to new friends. Irving becomes his constant companion. There
is friction in his relations with Charlie but with Irving's help Artie faces the conflicts. He also comes to a better understanding of Arlene with whom he is infatuated. At one point Irving says, "After all, a person has to solve his problems, not run away from them. A person can do anything if he just tries." *Irving and Me.* (45)

Sixteen-year-old Nathaniel, and his fourteen-year-old sister, Kimberly, run away to their Uncle Seth's cabin in northern Canada. There are many hardships as they cover the final lap of their journey by canoe. By the time they reach their destination, Kimberly realizes she is not made for this type of life and is quite ready to again face life with her autocratic father and self-centered stepmother. While the parental relationship is not improved, her mature point of view indicates it will be met with more understanding. On the other hand, Nathaniel is certain he cannot return. Because his uncle is in no position to offer hospitality, Nathaniel decides to make his own way in the northern woods. *A Star to the North.* (16)

After the death of their parents, Ponyboy and his two brothers choose to remain together. They must learn to give and accept love in the way each is capable of giving and receiving. Ponyboy tells how it looks and feels from the
wrong side of the tracks, of guerilla raids into his territory by the traditional, well-heeled enemy of the residential district, and of the beating that led to a murder charge and two deaths. This story can be termed "teens at the crossroads" -- the point of becoming "full-fledged hoods" or something special. Ponyboy comes to the realization that there is much good in all of the ones from both sides of the tracks. The Outsiders. (43)

The parents of Adam have been killed in a plane crash and he is living with two doting aunts. Life seems so unexciting that he runs away to live with his married cousin and husband. They are kind to Adam, send him to school and treat him as a son. Adam makes some good friendships. One of his friends is scarcely understood by anyone because he puts on airs and is difficult to know. It is finally discovered that his manner and stealing are attempts to make himself seen and heard by his parents. Adam learns that one cannot always judge people by the facade they put on. In the end Adam wants to return to his aunts, for he misses them. Adam Bookout. (73)

Siebren's first journey from his Dutch village by the sea begins with small incidents, exciting only for a boy who has had to spend all his free time at home caring for a trouble-
some baby brother. By the end of three days, however, he has caught a gigantic pike, discovered a secret passageway, and survived a tornado. Through it, he learns to understand his grandfather, his deaf-dumb uncle and his courageous little aunt. And, most of all, he has learned to wrestle and conquer his fears about himself. Belief in himself comes through the understanding of Aunt Hinka: "'Well, you are wonderful too,' she said. 'Oh, yes, you are. See, it has to be, because we are so alone. I live in a marsh with a deaf and dumb husband. You sit endless hours with a baby brother who can't talk, so both of us have to make things within ourselves -- for ourselves. If that's what your grandfather means by a handball of Satan, I for one am glad to be a handball. It's fun.'" Journey from Peppermint Street. (18)

A rich, spoiled teenager, Gil Ames, transfers to the same high school as Katie Rose and her friends attend. She becomes interested in him but is often embarrassed by his irresponsibility. Katie Rose is always ready to forgive Gil until she begins to fully understand their relationship. "She could only look at him with a wondering smile. He still thought it took only a penitent act and sweet talk to win her over. It had always worked in the past. She had been so ready to excuse, to champion him. Was this more of Mr. Jacoby's 'suffering is
learning'? For she knows suddenly that a girl isn't supposed to feel maternal and protective -- even apologetic -- for the boy she dates. That is what had been wrong from the start. There hadn't been love for Gil that lifted her to the clouds and dropped her to the depths. It had been only pity, and her wanting to help him -- to pull him out from under what he called his dark star." I Met a Boy I Used to Know. (86)

Every time the family moves, Henry Lovering finds himself an outcast because of his high I.Q. Now that they have reached the top, he hopes Fletch, who has discovered his secret, won't tell. The "top" is Crestview, and upperclass New York suburb, just the right setting for a successful young executive. For the first time, Henry is part of a group, that is, until the bomb shelter. Directed by his company president to install it, Mr. Lovering does, and thereby arouses deep hostility in his new neighbors. Strangely enough, it is the misfit and loner, Fletcher, who proves one real friend when trouble comes. Through him, Henry comes to realize he must shed the structure of social conformity. Later his mother discusses with him his new-found urge to be different: "Search for yourself, Henry. For the way you're going to be at your very best and your most honest. I don't think there's any greater adventure. I'm glad to see you go, even though it's an effort for me to say that." Henry 3. (55)
To Dion James, irritated by the clutter and insecurity of life with his talented, improvident father, Alcott-Simpson department store has been a symbol of elegance and order since childhood. But strange events at the store baffle and confuse him. Not until it is almost too late does he realize his danger, discover the power he is coping with, and recognize how much his ideas about life have changed. His new thinking is summed up the following way: "Like I say, I still get fed up at times, but in the last few months the trouble between my dad and me has begun to ease up a little. I've been doing some reading and thinking about the subject of rebellion, and it seems to me that rebellion is usually inevitable, and that it only gets useless when you forget that it's just a doorway and not a destination. Because if you settle down in a doorway, your future is going to be pretty narrow." *Eyes in the Fishbowl.* (77)

A white minister's family in a well-to-do neighborhood attempts to adopt black three-year-old Edgar Allan. Through his family's reactions to the baby and the pressure of public opinion, Michael comes to a better understanding of himself and each member. After the father's resolve is broken and Edgar Allan returns to the agency, the family must mend the wounds caused by divided loyalties within and
plan for the future with a greater knowledge of their own weaknesses. Edgar Allan. (62)

Elizabeth learns a lot about witchcraft from her friend Jennifer. She is fascinated with the idea and considers herself a witch. Their girlish adventures develop into real friendship so at length Elizabeth could say, "Neither of us pretends to be a witch anymore. Now we mostly enjoy being what we really are...just Jennifer and just me...just good friends. Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley, and Me, Elizabeth. (54)

After having a close relationship with his father, David begins to see him as a selfish man. His disillusionment drives him from home to East Village and a life of drugs and freedom. He is saved by Maggie and he finds love for the first time. His mother induces David to visit his father who is dying of cancer. His father still insists that David conform to his ideas; it is then that David knows that their relationship is dead. After his father's death, he realizes through his mother that he has been unjust to his father -- for even though his father's ideals were clouded, he was a good man. In the end his hatred dissolves and he finds some peace. He muses: "Crazy, crazy, to live your whole life with a person and not see him. And now it's
too late. I'll never know who he was." Run Softly, Go Fast. (89)

Nathan sails from Nantucket with his older brothers Caleb and Jeremy to discover the facts behind the sinking of the Amy Foster. In the course of events, Nathan learns some unhappy truths about Jeremy who drowns under mysterious circumstances. He also comes to understand and appreciate the feared sea captain, Caleb. A victim of a kind of madness, Caleb believes in some strange way that he is Ahab, straight from the tale of Moby Dick. The Dark Canoe. (65)

Young Dilar, of the Raft People, fears that his people, supposedly floating down a subterranean river towards a Better Place, are in fact, merely circling endlessly. Dilar finds his way outside and discovers many things such as hot and cold, day and night as well as the seasons. He meets various kinds of people. Dilar's search for answers to questions about others becomes a pilgrimage for self-knowledge. He learns the ultimate beauty of brutal truth. Old Virgan wisely comments: "Nothing is harder to believe than the truth. If it weren't so, all men would be good and kind and wise and happy." Journey Outside. (78)

Annie's parents allow her to make all her own decisions. She misunderstands their policy, thinking they don't really
care about her. Annie rebels by taking a live-in job with the Sigbys whose household is the exact opposite of her own. The main rule at the Sigbys' seems to be, "Ask, don't think," and it isn't long before Annie gets herself into an increasing number of predicaments. In the end Annie's ability to think gives her the clue for resolving the battle within herself. Annie, Annie. (14)

Davy Ross comes from a broken home. His mother is an alcoholic, his father has remarried. His grandmother, who has managed to give Davy a fairly normal boyhood, dies. He must live in New York with his mother. He takes with him Fred, his dog, the one link to happiness and security. He can talk to Fred when loneliness crowds him. School also helps where he becomes a close friend of Douglas Altschuler. After a brief physical relationship with Douglas, Davy is caught in a whirl-wind of fear and guilt. His new sexual awareness makes Davy wonder whether the trip through adolescence to adulthood will be worth it. After absorbing the experience he learns that self-knowledge is strength. I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip. (19)

Courage and its development. -- This tale is set in a time when loyalty to Henry III of England is being questioned and tested. Richard, the twelve-year-old son of the
Earl of Travers, sees his father's castle fall to an adherent of deMontfort. The boy thinks his father is slain and he is taken into virtual captivity at another castle. Menaced by the wicked chatelaine of the castle, Richard fights his way clear and eventually helps to restore the family fortune. Richard always defends his father's good name even when doing so brings abuse to himself. In the process of escape and rescue of his father, he also saves Alys, a young noble girl given to the care of his own captors and promised in a marriage of convenience. High Courage. (87)

A seaside village in England in 1940 is the setting for this realistic story of two boys, too young to go to war but old enough to feel its tensions and problems. They cooperate to convert a stable into living quarters for Pat and his pregnant mother, evacuees from the London slums. Together they plot a scheme to take a boat, the Dolphin, across the English Channel to assist in the evacuation of Dunkirk. The tragic death of Pat after he returns to Dunkirk to resume the rescue operation emphasizes his desperate courage. The Dolphin Crossing. (84)

Lieutenant Helge Ramsvik, a new and untried pilot of the Norwegian Air Force, takes a helicopter out over the vast ice-choked Greenland sea on a long flight from a vessel of a
sailing fleet. An instrument failure (and possibly a pilot blunder) causes the helicopter to stray far off course and far out of radio range. Its fuel spent, it is forced down on an ice field. The four occupants must somehow make contact with the fleet or with possible rescue planes. It is Helge's level thinking and determination which saves them from starvation and death in the endless snow and makes rescue operations possible. **Contact Lost.** (36)

Daniel West, whose mother is dead, lives in Salem during the time when conflict between the Tories and Whigs is strongest. His father is a zealous Tory, and this makes it difficult for him to understand or communicate with him. Upon changing his allegiance, he finds himself with no friends and, in his suffering, he retreats to an island alone for some weeks. Here he thinks out his views. Returning to Salem, he finds the homes of Tories have been destroyed and this includes his own. Eventually, Daniel has the courage to admit that he is a Whig, and his whole new life seems to open up to him -- his father, too, seems to find great respect for him in his newly avowed convictions. **Early Thunder.** (26)

The eleven-year-old son of a village chief on the Island of Bora. Bora, is laughed at by the other boys because he is so small. Poko soon feels even more of an outcast
because he believes that his accidental discovery of the undersea home of a "golden demon" has led to the destruction of the village by a terrible storm followed by a famine. Eventually, his small size enables the courageous Poko to enter the sunken wreck, kill the giant fish imprisoned there and feed the village. *Poko and the Golden Demon.* (46)

Right out of Boot Camp, Seaman Kelsey Devereux is assigned to the destroyer *Caron* and becomes part of the Solomon Island invasion. The *Caron* is disabled when hit by a Japanese plane and shortly afterwards Kelsey and the captain are the only ones aboard. The Japanese ship has taken the crippled destroyer into tow. But the two work to free a torpedo jammed in its firing tube, hoping to use it against the enemy ship. Against great odds, they manage to destroy the enemy vessel. *Silent Ship, Silent Sea.* (92)

Rilla leaves the emergency room in a panic without identifying herself. She has brought to the hospital the newspaper boy her car hit on a foggy night. Conscience stricken, she follows the boy's progress by means of the daily news, sends all her savings to him and buys him a new bike. Her best friend, Seth, confesses his guilt in a misdemeanor and rights the matter. From his support and example, Rilla gains the strength she needs to admit her guilt to her parents.
Building self-confidence. -- Feeney always seems to be a girl who has to substitute her lack of talents with other less-accepted abilities, such as being able to hang from her toes. Her mother is a writer and has the knack of understanding Feeney and encouraging her for every small success. Yet Feeney cannot accept this in herself, even though she likes school, has many friends and enjoys a happy social life in high school. After high school, she finds a young man whom she deeply loves, and marries him, having a sizable family within a few years. It is only when she continues her schooling further and has some success in writing, an ability she had always thought limited to her mother and sister, that she finds the self-confidence she had always lacked. When she finally discovers the secret of her own self-confidence: "I felt a surge of freedom. And I swung along, not caring what anyone thought about me. I did a little jig. I could do what I wanted as long as I had the courage to do it. It was up to me. It had always been up to me. That was the secret. The freedom! The high heart was the courage INSIDE the proud carriage. Not the carriage itself." Confessions of a Toe Hanger. (37)

The struggles of a ten-year-old boy to live down his
physically appropriate nickname, "Peewee", by accepting the responsibility of raising a puppy he has hidden, create this story. The sympathetic understanding of his family is contrasted with the selfish attitude of his friend's family. His success makes him more sure of his next venture. Three Times Lost Dog. (44)

The story is told by a forthright, good-humored child whose family life is stable and secure. Her best friend, Al, whose parents are divorced, lives in an apartment down the hall with her busy, distracted mother. Al is a bright, over-fat girl, who proudly tries to be a non-conformist to hide the hurt and loneliness. Their elderly friend, who works as assistant superintendent of their building, understands Al and helps her to face up to her fears and cope with her insecurities. A Girl Called Al. (30)

Facing Reality. -- Mikkel's older brother, Teddy, is retarded but the family doesn't want to send him to an institution where he might be unhappy. Teddy accidentally knocks out a boy's teeth in a game. Mikkel decides to run away with him to the mountains to protect him from the police. It is on their nightmarish journey across the Norwegian countryside that Mikkel begins to understand a little of what is wrong with Teddy and what is really best for him and the family.
In Mikkel's love for his brother there is realistic embarrassment but no shame, a realistic range of reactions from people he meets and realistic acceptance of the limits of the educability of the retarded. Don't Take Teddy. (25)

When Grover's mother comes home from the hospital, she spends a lot of time talking to him. She impresses him with the fact that he takes after her side of the family because from the day he was born he didn't howl. So after her death, Grover tries to continue living as he did before his mother's illness. Through his attempts to deal with the changes death has made in his life, he learns that real friends must share the good and the bad, and people have to howl sometimes. Grover. (10)

Sensitive Richard Gould is constantly disappointed by people: by his stingy, drunken father, who deserts the family; by his best friend Willie; and by his dashing, sympathetic cousin, Jack, who is phony. Richard has a strong belief in himself and his skill in running. He agrees to a dreaded race with a feared opponent but doesn't get a chance to prove himself because the race has been fixed. Balanced against this episode is a second self-confrontation in which he must choose between denying his father or identifying an unconscious, hospitalized man. With compassion and realistic
awareness, the son accepts his prodigal parent. **False Start.**

A little girl, unhappy because of family arguments and conflicts, escapes into a world of fantasy. Involved with talking animals and insects, her adventure is filled with dangers and heroism as well as developing friendships. Leaving her dream world, the little girl is now able to see the good and lovable in her own family circle. **Knee-deep in Thunder.**

An only child gives in retrospect an account of his childhood and adolescent years. He finds out that he has a stepmother; his father drinks; and he himself often gets into trouble with the police. He remembers his friends and the bad things he did. After his father's death, he and his stepmother are leaving home. He ends up with a nostalgia for what was and yet wishes his life had been different. He sums it up with: "Look, Mr. Gookie, hunter, chainsaver, goldtooth, con-man, salesman -- and sometimes boozer -- you were my father. That meant a hell of a lot to me, and it still does. I never told you this before. Maybe I needed all these days, this night and all these vibrations from the past to say it -- I loved you." **Vibrations.**

Melinda's father, a space scientist, gives her a
trip to Mars with him as a graduation gift. Loyalty forces her to accept when she would prefer to remain on earth. But she meets and becomes involved with a Martian, Alex, who tries to convince her of the superior life on Mars. Melinda fights the conflicting ideas of returning home and the growing truth that she could be quite happy on Mars. Then her father is killed in an accident, Alex risks his life for her and Melinda resolves her struggle between security and reaching out for what is better. Journey Between Worlds. (23)

Compassion and involvement with others. — When her widowed mother remarries and goes abroad for her honeymoon, thirteen-year-old Katie — considerably upset by these events — is sent for a three-week holiday with an aunt who owns a seaside hotel. At first, she is very disappointed at the conditions being far from plush, but becomes completely entangled in the lives of her aunt and the fellow guests. The Other People. (58)

A charming young trumpeter, Alaine Eieudonne, fleeing with Napoleon's army from Moscow in 1812, befriends a small French girl and her governess. After Alain's horse is shot, the three band together and start the long and heartbreaking trek back to Warsaw. Alaine sacrifices his own comfort and convenience to help Annette and Madame Welles as well as his
Three boys, freshly graduated from high school in Southern California, find the summer days boring until they pool their funds to buy a long-neglected 1930 Packard and bring it back to life. The local car club sponsors a distance rally between them and their rivals, owners of a six-year-old Ford hardtop. En route to Portland, Oregon, they encounter pitfalls and adventures in many forms, from a violent rainstorm to a hair-raising rescue at the edge of a cliff. The boys are very sensitive to each others' feelings and needs and make light of their "little humanitarian episode ... just because we were feeling so gold-plated good." A Magnificent Jalopy. (80)

A twelve-year-old pickpocket witnesses the murder of a man whose pocket he has just emptied. He must use all his wits to escape the murderers who realize he has the document they are seeking. Smith tries to get someone to teach him to read so that he will know the significance of his stolen treasure. Every avenue seems closed until a blind man befriends him and makes Smith a part of his household. In the situation which unfolds, this street urchin and the old blind magistrate work together using what strength and wits they have against villainy. Smith thinks he is fighting for personal gain, Mr.
Mansfield for abstract justice. Each learns that it was chiefly compassion that moved him. Smith. (27)

Elana and Randil are chosen to make a secret visit to another planet in order to prevent the inhabitants from engaging in an internal nuclear war. Elana becomes a close friend of a Torisian named Kari. Trouble between Elana and Randil results after he falls in love with Kari. Elana is arrested and subjected to terrible torture when she tries to convince the authorities that the spacecraft given them by Randil is sabotaged. Kari, also dedicated to preventing the war, is arrested and tortured too. At this point, Randil seeing that both girls will be killed, finds a way to get them all to the space ship. The girls escape but Randil and the other Torisians are blown up. Throughout, Elana is described as being highly sensitive to the pain of others."

The Far Side of Evil. (22)

This story depicts the problems of a fat boy whose main concern is food. After he becomes involved in the school hockey team and fights to help them win an important game, he transfers his love to this sport and becomes a normal "one of the crowd." Porko von Popbutton. (20)

Kirsty is very unhappy with her new, young stepmother. She resents the place she has taken in her father's affections
and also the many ways the new wife is like Kirsty's dead mother. To escape the unbearable situation, Kirsty takes a summer job away from home. She becomes very close to Jake, a son of a local doctor. Through his love, she arrives at a new maturity which helps her to forget her own problems. She then is free to help find the solution of Jake's mysterious illness, give her friend, Dinah, understanding, spur her brother's recovery from a bad accident and most of all, see her stepmother in her true beauty. The Whistling Boy. (5)

In this tale of knighthood, Taran the Pig-keeper rises to High King because of his personal integrity. The Princess, Eilonwy learns that her powers of enchantress are unimportant if she is not free to love Taran. When they both realize that their greatest dignity is in their power to be for others, they rise to regality. As Taran noted: "Long ago I yearned to be a hero without knowing, in truth, what a hero was. Now perhaps, I understand it a little better. A grower of turnips or a shaper of clay, a Commot farmer or a king -- every man is a hero if he strives more for others than for himself alone."

The High King. (1)

The last group of weavers in all China lived in a remote place, jealously guarding a once-great art. It was Li Po who determined to find the Silkspinners and persuade
them to return to the world that needed them. Equipped with a quick wit, courage, kindliness and his flute, Li Po set forth on his quest. He found the Silkspinners and won them back from sadness born of selfishness to the joy of giving. Li Po speaks to them: "You retired from the world because there is strife, selfishness and sorrow there. But you have not changed the world by coming here. And you have brought strife and sorrow with you. As for selfishness, you are guilty of the greatest selfishness of all by hiding here!"

The Silkspinners. (56)

Emily, who writes poetry, is an only child and has to grapple with her family's move to a new town. What is even more demanding is that she has to cope with a new kind of daily living with four much younger cousins whose mother has been hospitalized with tuberculosis. The days sharpen with happiness as Emily discovers that being one of five is fun and that sharing your things with a big family can be rewarding. She gains a true friend in Kate, a neighbor, who also writes poetry. Together they learn about the hurts and doubts, the excitement and joy of true friendship. Look Through My Window. (57)

Self-fulfillment. -- The young hero always promises himself that someday he will go and find the wild donkeys.
His people believe that whoever sees a wild donkey is destined for greater than ordinary life. After Isfendiar completes his adventure and returns with his own donkey, he has changed into a man and is content to pursue his father's work in the hopes of becoming like him. For, in the boy's own words: "He has learned to run a line and to see things in the evening dew that other men don't see in all the great cities of the world. And I want to learn the things of the mountains and deserts, of great poets. My father knows of these things and knows how to tell of them without seeming to speak."

*Isfendiar and the Wild Donkeys.* (68)

Lucy Snow wants to be grown up and she wants to see the St. Louis Exposition. She attempts to accomplish both by posing as Phoebe Snow, the symbol of the Lackawanna Railroads' clean ride. She is provided free transportation to St. Louis but the incidents on the way bring about a greater understanding of herself and others. *Phoebe Snow.* (31)

Laura and Almanzo are married and begin their life together on a homestead and tree claim on a South Dakota prairie. The story depicts the first four years of companionship and happiness which are also a time of struggle. With the birth of a daughter and a son, come the joys and sorrows that every homesteader knows. Laura, who had not wanted to
be a farm wife, finds herself as seen in her own words, "We'll always be farmers, for what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh." The First Four Years. (94)

Bill and Julie, two young children, meet during the blitz of 1940 in London and cling to each other for survival. They knew they had to get along by themselves if they wanted to stay. With a tremendous sense of freedom and vitality, they join forces, determined to avoid evacuation. For the first time in their lives they are alone, standing on their own feet. Fireweed. (85)

Old enough to become a partner with his pearl-diver father, Ramón no longer believes in the village tales of the monster-fish, Manta Diablo. Ramón finds the great black pearl of his dreams, and strange events follow. He becomes convinced that the giant manta does possess supernatural power. Subtly conveyed is the idea that personal sacrifice is required to achieve a great ambition and that a gift to Heaven does not cancel the need for common sense and self-reliance. The Black Pearl. (64)

Responsibility for others. -- In the seventeenth century, with Denmark at war with Sweden, Dag is left homeless by the death of both parents. He sets out to find the king to help him in his distress. During his travels, he
is treated unkindly most of the time. But he makes friends with Kirsten, a young girl of his own age. In the end he is unjustly killed by a knight. Another friend, Peter, realizes he had fled from his responsibility to Dag: "Now he understood clearly that roads do divide, at the cross road there is a choice, and blinding oneself to it is a form of choosing, too ..." Peter undertakes to do for Kirsten what he could have wanted to do for Dag. The Untold Tale. (41)

Sara is unhappy about her enormous feet, her ridiculous hair and her unpopularity. She has an affectionate envy of her older sister, gives a grudging tolerance to her Aunt Willie and misses the closeness to her father, lost since her mother's death. For her retarded brother, Charlie, she has a tender love. Charlie was fascinated with the swans they watched on the lake. He went during the night to find them. The next morning Sara forgets her own miseries as she searches the dense woods, feeling all the terror she knew Charlie was experiencing. A former enemy, Joe, becomes an ally and they discover Charlie, unhappy but well. Sara knows that she will never be the same. "...and she had just taken an enormous step up out of the shadows, and she was standing, waiting, and there were other steps in front of her, so that she could go as high as the sky..." The Summer of the Swans. (8)
Themes Satisfying Aesthetic Needs

Truth that good triumphs over evil. -- Through this book the reader should be able to retire from reality and live in the make-believe world that he enjoyed as a small child. Three beautiful girls are imprisoned in a remote inn as servants to the witch and her half-man, half-devil husband. Three students spend the night at the inn and one cleverly outwits the couple, depriving them of their powers and banishing them to a helpless existence. The Fearsome Inn. (74)

Search for meaning in life. -- April's mother is on a singing tour leaving April to live with her grandmother. The girl feels a definite dislike for the older woman. She gradually makes friends with two black children and together they devise imaginative games. Becoming interested in Egypt, they create their own Egypt in a garden space behind a ramshackle fence. The club grows but is threatened by a murder which occurs in the neighborhood. All are required to remain off the streets. Curiosity overcomes them and they return to their game. April is attacked by the murderer who is apprehended. April comes to find happiness with her grandmother and friends realizing that having everything in life does not bring contentment. Her mother could not offer her what
she needed most and it is implied that April will remain with her grandmother. *The Egypt Game.* (76)

An Assistant Pig-Keeper wants to be a hero, so Taran looks for his parentage, hoping that it will prove his nobility and make it possible for him to marry the Princess Eilowy. A shepherd, Craddock, claims to be Taran's father. After accepting Taran's help in building his house, Craddock is involved in an accident and nearly dies. He reveals his lies to Taran and releases him. Gradually Taran realizes that his motive for seeking his parentage is selfish, and he comes to grips with himself, no longer placing any importance in that which he'd always considered essential. Taran begins to accept himself for what he is: "It was not fear that held me back. Will you know the truth? I was ashamed to be base-born, so ashamed it sickened me. I would have left Craddock to his death. I was ashamed to be the son of a herdsman. But no longer. Now my shame is for myself. As for my parentage, it makes little difference. True kinship has naught to do with blood ties, however strong they be. I think we are all kin, brothers and sisters one to the other, all children of all parents. The birthright I once sought, I seek no longer."

*Taran Wanderer.* (2)

Karen and Tom's parents have died in an accident.
They are forced to live with an aunt and uncle who are alcoholics. Unhappy, they run away and encounter the Sand Ponies, which seem to symbolize hope for them. After their kindness to the ponies (they set them free when they discovered that crooks are selling them), their lives gradually become better -- with a promise of a home and the return of their own horses, sold after their parents' death. The Sand Ponies are a reminder that the real meaning in life is found only in goodness. The Sand Ponies. (61)

Seventeen-year-old Dewey, who works at a hospital, gets involved with another employee, Yvette. After a night with her, Dewey is madly in love. But Yvette refuses to waste time on him, saying that he is out of it. She runs away and Dewey isn't sure whether he should follow or do something useful with his life. In his letter of resignation to the hospital, Dewey says: "You see...this very precious and beautiful person is going to start a new world order based on love and peace, and I'm going to be worthy of it or die." But he rips up that letter and substitutes, "I don't really know what I'm going to do. But I'm going to do something, and I have a strange feeling it's going to be phantasmagorically different." I Never Loved Your Mind. (98)

Need for ideals and dreams. -- Sylvie's home life is
very difficult. Her hopes for the future are as evanescent as the min-min, a beckoning light that dances at night on the Australian plains. Her brother, Reg, is running wild. The new schoolteacher who encourages Sylvie to dream of a better life now threatens to quit his position. When Reg is in trouble because of schoolboy prank, the brother and sister run away to the Tuckers. Her friend, Mrs. Tucker, helps her by affectionate discipline and Sylvie starts to blossom into a young woman, with a sense of inner strength and worth. She is ready to return home with a hope for the future. The Min-Min. (9)

After his wife dies, Jobediah goes back to the strip, an isolated part of Arizona, where he had lived when he was young. Of his four sons, only ten-year old Nate is happy. The older twins have their own concerns and small Benjy is too quiet and withdrawn to care. Jobediah had been a dreamer but felt that too much wind chasing had got him nowhere. So he tells his son at least once a day, "Them as chases the wind don't catch nothing." But Ma, a friendly neighbor, helps Nate with, "I reckon maybe Jobediah Klink has forgot some folks need hopin' and dreamin' in their lives. Without it, they'd be lost." Later Nate realizes Ma's wisdom and says, "...the best thing about hope is having it. And there never was anyone
anywhere in the whole world that didn't need to do a little wind chasing once in a while."  The Wind Chasers.  (93)

Sam is fascinated by trumpeter swans. When on a camping trip, he secretly watches a family of them grow. The story of the swan family evolves in which Louie, one of the babies, cannot talk so he goes to school to learn to read and write. To win his true love, he masters the trumpet and she cannot resist his call. The secret of the trumpeter's whereabouts seems to be a part of Sam's own self realization. As he said, "Louis would pine away in captivity. He needs wild places...Louis is following a dream. We must all follow a dream."  Sam is following a dream like the swan. The Trumpet of the Swan.  (91)

A black boy, Matthew, lives in a happy home with foster parents and other foster children who love. But every now and then he wants "a quiet place" away from his family where he can sit and read his book, and dream. His quiet place is the public library which now is to be torn down. He searches until he finds two quiet spots, one inside and one outside. A Quiet Place.  (6)

Albert Scully has no friends, his school performance is shoddy, his parents are disappointed in him; he likes gardening, collecting recipes, and foreign plays. In the
eighty-year-old Mrs. Woodfin he finds a friend who thinks he is an interesting and important human being. For the first time, Albert has confidence in the future and himself as an individualist who needs a dream. Albert has rejected school, because he feels it useless. Mrs. Woodfin helps him understand its importance: "My dear young man, can't you see that the only way to be unconventional is to fulfill your conventional obligations first? You must earn your right to be a nonconformist..." In regard to his dream, Mrs. Woodfin advises him, "It's not the dream that matters, Mr. Scully, but the having of it." The Dream Watcher. (88)

Ali, a Tunisian cave-dwelling boy, is forced by his father, a Bedouin chief, to attend the new school. Thus he meets modern ways. He becomes a friend of the new doctor's son. Still, Ali has his own special dream -- to capture a gazelle. When he finally succeeds, Ali realizes that he must set the animal free; just as he has been set free by his recent education. "Maybe they couldn't talk together, or even understand the same things, Ali thought. But they had some things in common, he and his gazelle. They had life in common, the pound of heartbeats, and the gathering drive for the great leap inside. He had been held captive in the school by his father's wisdom or his father's love. And, in turn, he had
held captive a wild thing of the desert. All this they had
shared. Now they were both free: his gazelle to race the
desert sands forever, and to turn to gold on mountain peaks
in the morning sun. He to choose from all the world's work
that which appealed to him most." Ali. (67)

Appreciation of beauty. -- When Charlie encounters
an old junk collector in an alley, he first distrusts, then
ridicules, but finally follows him. The young Negro's
curiosity leads him to three towers, beautifully designed
and constructed entirely of discarded junk. Charlie learns
that beauty can arise from what seems ugly. Beautiful Junk.
(59)

Based on the Old Testament account of the building
of the ark, this story describes the dealings of Ham, a
deceitful son of Noe. He forces a neighbor, Reuben, to go
in his place to the land of Kemi and obtain specimens of
sacred animals to take into the ark. It is Reuben's gift
of music that saves him when he is captured. The young man
plays a rough instrument like a flute. He is in rags and
chained. But he has a talent for music that can hold a court
spellbound. After returning to his own land, Reuben meets
more conflict. Ham is killed and God tells Noe to replace
him on the ark with Reuben. God speaks: "...you will take
Reuben and Thamar in their places, to fulfill Ham's bargain which he failed to keep. For the world needs courageous men, and Reuben's music is too good to be lost; it will go on and on, to his children and his children's children." The Moon in the Cloud. (39)

Hero-worship prompts Geeder into imagining a very regal Zeely to be a Watutsi queen. Zeely's outward beauty and apparent inner strength attract Geeder. Geeder shares her fantasies with the village children. Only Zeely, herself, can bring Geeder back to reality. Geeder realizes that real qualities of royalty are inside a person. Zeely. (34)

Gilly awakens on the morning before Christmas to find a red onion -- Grandmother's gift to him. She was gone and he was to be alone for three days. Puzzled and distraught, Gilly pondered the onion's meaning as he wandered through the snow, rescuing three creatures from cold, hunger and fear. Later in his reflections by the warm fire, he realizes Grandmother's gift was "like love, layer upon layer of unending mystery, but to be tasted and smelled and seen in all its loveliness." Onion Journey. (17)

Conclusions

It is evident from this study that literature, available to students of upper intermediate and junior high level,
does contain themes which are useful in guidance programs. Research on this subject emphasizes the importance of literature which meets the child's needs in social, aesthetic and emotional development. It is the responsibility of educators to direct students to literature of this quality. Therefore, future studies of this type would be helpful for assessment of current literature. The investigator strongly hopes that such studies will be forthcoming.


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