1982

Realism in young adult literature : criteria and analysis

Maryjo Barnett Chinn
Portland State University

REALISM IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE:

CRITERIA AND ANALYSIS

by

MARYJO BARNETT CHINN

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
IN
EDUCATION

Program in Educational Media/Librarianship

Portland State University

1982

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Peggy Sharp for her conscientious advising, Susan Groves for her helpful suggestions, and Steve Chinn for his patience.

I would also like to thank the other members of my committee: Kathy Greey, Trudy Williams, and Dr. Joyce Petrie, who put much time and energy into this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PROBLEM AND PURPOSE

The term adolescence derives from a Latin word meaning "to grow up".[1] This growth from childhood to adulthood is both physical and psychological, and it is the psychological growth which often baffles parents, teachers, and the young adults themselves.

The psychological changes are sometimes manifested by the young adults' preoccupation with music, the supernatural, or religion.[2] The young adult is also curious about people he knows or may dream of meeting, and about places he'd like to visit. This curiosity indicates the young adult is involved in a search; a search for identity. Young adults are reaching out into new relationships and recognizing, sorting out, and accepting new identities.[3]

[1]William Morris, ed., The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (Boston: American Heritage and Houghton Miflin, 1973), p. 17.

[2]Carolyn W. Carmichael, Books to Meet the Needs of Teenagers, U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document 079 709, 1973, p. 9.

[3]Beverly Haley, The Basics of/and Individualizing Adolescent Literature for 150 Kids, More or Less, U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 123 628, 1976, p. 5.

As a young adult searches for his identity he tries on new roles. He may have been a son, a brother or a friend but as he moves through adolescence, he may become a member of a rock band or a religious cult, a boyfriend, or part of a special group. He may try to be just like everyone else only to later reject that role to become an eccentric individual. He accepts responsibility for his decisions and his behavior and may suffer or rejoice in the freedom of that responsibility.

Why, in the midst of this search, does a young adult hide a paperback behind his science text, read until three a.m., or use the same book year after year for book reports? For many young adults, reading is part of the search.

G. Robert Carlsen has presented several stages which describe what the young adult is looking for when he reads.[4] A junior-high school student seeks vicarious experience. With no personal risk, he can experience the thrill of an adventure. Later he is so concerned with his own identity that he seeks books in which he sees himself. In these books he can meet others who share his problems and gain insight into how these problems might be solved,[5]

[4]G. Robert Carlsen, "Literature Is.", Young Adult Literature in the Seventies, ed. by Jana Varlejs (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1978), pp. 9-16.

[5]Patricia Jean Cianciolo, "Children's Literature Can Affect Coping Behavior," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 43 (May, 1965), p. 897.

yet he need not suffer any consequences.

Reading, then, can help young adults make decisions and "try on" new roles. Lang contends that "Cognition and affective behavior can be considerably increased or altered through . . . reading."[6] Reading can not only provide assistance in decision making, but can strengthen the reader's understanding of human motives and circumstances.[7]

In literature, young adults are often depicted in situations where they are held responsible for their actions, where they must make difficult decisions, or where they are responsible for the welfare of others. Young adults often take on parenting responsibilities in situations where they are responsible for the welfare of brothers, sisters, or other youngsters.

If the young adult is seeking role models, solutions, ideas, or examples when he reads; if literature does provide these; and if reading does affect behavior; it is imperative that young adult literature provide realistic pictures of life. Real life is not filled with fairy tale characters and situations. Edwards states, "It is a disservice to a young person . . . to acquaint him with only

[6]Helene Lang, Literary Models for Adolescent Behavior, U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 076 954, 1973, p. 6.

[7]Anne Snyder, Realistic Fiction for Youth, U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document 157 050, 1978, p. 7.

good, innocuous people in ideal situations."[8]

Evaluating realism in young adult literature is a very subjective task. The purpose of this paper is to provide a concrete means for librarians or evaluators to use when trying to determine realistic qualities of a book.

This paper will study realism in young adult literature, focusing specifically on those books in which young adults accept parenting roles. First, professional literature about realism will be reviewed from a historical perspective, then criteria for realism will be examined. New criteria will be synthesized and applied to six novels. An annotated bibliography of novels in which young adults accept parenting roles will be presented.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

1. young adult---person between the ages of 12 and 20. This paper will focus on the younger ages, 12-14.
2. young adult literature---materials freely chosen for reading by people between the ages of 12 and 20.[9] It can mean literature written especially for the

[8]Margaret A. Edwards, Fair Garden and the Swarm of Beasts: The Library and the Young Adult (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1974), p. 71.

[9]Kenneth L. Donelson and Alleen Pace Nilsen, Literature for Today's Young Adult (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1980), p. 5.

teenager, or books that adults read, which teenagers turn to and enjoy.[10]

3. The terms "realism", "realistic fiction", and "realistic literature" are used synonymously.
4. The pronoun "he" is used for simplicity in writing style.

PROCEDURES

The following techniques and procedures were used in researching this paper.

Titles of young adult books in which a young adult assumes a parenting role were collected from The Bookfinder by Susan Spredemann Dreyer, Washington Library Network subject listings, a survey sent to selected young adult librarians in Washington, selected bibliographies, and recommendations from students, teachers, and librarians.

To obtain information about realism and to determine if any similar studies had been conducted, computerized SMERC and KNOW-NET searches were run. Manual searches of Eric, the Education Index, and Library Literature were completed.

The Port Townsend Library, a member of the Washington Library Network, was used for many Inter-Library Loan

[10]G. Robert Carlsen, Books and the Teenage Reader, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Harper, 1980) , p. 1.

transactions, and the extensive University of Washington microform department was used for obtaining dissertations and other documents.

Human sources included Dr. Sam Sebesta of the University of Washington who was contacted by phone, and Betsy Byars, Mary Stolz, and Vera Cleaver who responded to letters. Walt Morey's comments about realism are from a recent conference in Port Townsend where he spoke. Copies of the above are found in Appendix A.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Broderick, Dorothy M. "The Twelve-Year-Old 'Adult' Reader." Library Journal, 90 (May 15, 1965), 17-21.

Carlsen, G. Robert. Books and the Teenage Reader, 2nd rev. ed. New York: Harper, 1980.

Carmichael, Carolyn W. Books to Meet the Needs of Teenagers, U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 079 709, 1973.

Cianciolo, Patricia Jean. "Children's Literature Can Affect Coping Behavior." Personnel and Guidance Journal, 42 (May, 1965), 897-903.

Donelson, Kenneth L. and Alleen Pace Nilsen. Literature for Today's Young Adult. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1980.

Dreyer, Sharon Spredemann. The Bookfinder: A Guide to Children's Literature About the Needs and Problems of Youth Aged 2-15. Circle Pines, Maine: American Guidance Service, 1977.

Fry, Ray M. "Some Recent Trends in Books for Young Adults." Top of the News, (May, 1961), 30-35.

Galen, Nancy and Jerry L. Johns. "Children in Conflict." School Library Journal, 26 (November, 1979), 25-8.

Haley, Beverly. The Basics of/and Individualizing Adolescent Literature for 150 Kids, More or Less. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 123 628, 1976.

Hornburger, Jane M. Coping With Change Through Literature. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 105 521, 1975.

Huck, Charlotte, S. Children's Literature in the Elementary School, 3rd ed. New York: Holt, 1976.

Hutchison, Margaret. "Fifty Years of Young Adult Reading, 1921-1971." Top of the News, 30 (November, 1973), 24-52.

Lang, Helene. Literary Models for Adolescent Behavior. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 076 954, 1973.

Mertz, Maia Pank. "The New Realism: Traditional Cultural Values in Recent Young-Adult Fiction." Phi Delta Kappan, 60 (October, 1978), 101-105.

Morris, William, ed. The American Heritage Dictionary. Boston: American Heritage and Houghton Mifflin, 1973.

Parker, Virginia. "Some Thoughts on Walls." Language Arts, 54 (January, 1977), 25-28.

Raymond, Margaret Thomsen. "Bread For Adolescence." Horn Book, 11 (September-October, 1935), 300-302.

Root, Shelton L., Jr. "The New Realism---Some Personal Reflections." Language Arts, (January, 1977), 19-24.

Snyder, Anne. Realistic Fiction for Youth. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 157 050, 1978.

Varlejs, Jana, ed. Young Adult Literature in the Seventies; A Selection of Readings. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1978.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND STUDY

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ABOUT REALISM--- HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

As early as 1935, readers and critics of young adult literature called for more realism in the genre. Margaret Thomsen Raymond and Alice Dalgleish were among the proponents of realism. Raymond believed such literature would depict the contemporary American scene with honesty.[1] The value of realistic books was that they could help young adults understand their roles in society while learning about the roles of others. Raymond called realism "the bread of literature" because of its potential to help youngsters grow.[2]

Alice Dalgleish also recognized situations which confronted young adults that would be realistic for novels. She advocated books with young people in them who seemed like real young people, problems that seemed like real

[1]Margaret Thomsen Raymond, "Bread for Adolescence", Horn Book, 11 (September-October 1935), p. 300.

[2]Raymond, p. 301.

problems. Writing in 1934, she stated, "only real life will keep readers of this age interested in books."[3]

Ironically, the young adult literature published in the next twenty years, the 1940's through early 1960's, has been heavily criticized for not portraying real life. These were the teenage romance type of novel, filled with white, middle class values and morality. They have been charged with having such unrealistic qualities as Cinderella plots[4], unrealistically easy solutions to problems[5], and stereotyped characters. Parents were nice, concerned, perfect people with little to do except worry about housekeeping and how things were going at the office. Boys were preoccupied with sports and cars and definitely did not understand girls, who were busy worrying about hairstyles, clothes, and dates. A typical plot would have centered around a girl's attempts, using hairstyles and clothing but not intelligence, to drag a boy away from his car or sport to take her to the prom. The situation may have been complicated by another boy or girl, and may have looked hopeless for a while, but in the end the girl would

[3]Alice Dalgliesh, "Books for Today's Children," New York Librarian, 14 (November, 1934), p. 131.

[4]Anne Emery, "In Defense of the Junior Novel" Top of the News, (May, 1961), p. 23.

[5]Al Muller, "Thirty Popular Adolescent Novels," English Journal, (September, 1974), p. 98.

triumphantly parade off to the prom on the arm of her knight in shining armor. Alice Krahn wrote in 1961 that this type of novel was only a game.[6] It didn't depict broad human experience, but dealt with some trivial problem. This shortcoming will later be incorporated into the definition of realism and criteria for realism used in this paper.

Young adult literature changed in the early 1960's as ideas once considered taboo were the topics of books. Emily Neville's It's Like This, Cat won the 1964 Newbery Award and shocked some people because the parents in the book were not characterized as the "perfect parents" of earlier young adult literature. Dave, the 14-year-old boy in the story, frankly comments on his parents' shortcomings.

Ursula Nordstrom quotes Emily Neville's acceptance speech:

> "The real world with its shadings of light and dark is so much more beautiful than the real world of good and bad. It is also more confusing. I think the teenage reader is ready for both."[7]

Neville's statement depicts a change from the good/bad, black/white world of the 1940's, 1950's, and early 1960 literature in which values and morality were strictly

[6]Alice Krahn, "The Case Against the Junior Novel," Top of the News, (May, 1961), p. 20.

[7]Ursula Nordstrom, "Honesty in Teenage Novels", Top of the News, (November, 1964), p. 35.

defined and the heroes and villains easily identified. This change is another quality which will later be incorporated into the definition and criteria for realism used in this paper.

Other formerly taboo topics to appear in the 1960's were drugs, sex and sexuality, poverty, and desertion. Mothers had affairs and didn't get married, daughters got pregnant, sons rebelled against their fathers.[8] The books which dealt with these formerly taboo topics, these problems, became known as "problem novels", and because these problems were supposedly the real problems facing young adults, this genre of problem novels was termed "New Realism".[9] Root defined the New Realism as "that fiction for young adults which addresses itself to personal problems and social issues heretofore considered taboo for fictional treatment by the general public."[10] Root's definition of the New Realism indicates that real problems, personal problems, were indeed part of realistic fiction, but these problems could not be trivial nor unique to one individual.

[8]Lou Willett Staneck, "Real People, Real Books: About Young Adult Readers," Top of the News, 31 (June, 1975), p. 417.

[9]Donelson, p. 181.

[10]Shelton J. Root, Jr., "The New Realism--Some Personal Reflections," Language Arts, (January, 1977), p. 19-24.

These topics were indicative of the problems facing young adults in the 1960's, but many books were still criticized for being unrealistic because of the way the topics were treated. Engdahl wrote that a novel was not realistic just because it dealt with a contemporary problem,[11] and Mertz believed that New Realism masked a lot of traditional values.[12]

Characters involved in formerly tabooed behavior (for novels) usually suffered consequences for their indulgences. Examples of such behavior would be sexual relationships, experimenting with drugs, drinking, running away from home, and disobeying parents. Rinsky stated that tabooed behavior with consequences was not realistic,[13] because obviously not all young adults were doomed in the 1960's because they tried drugs or had sex.

Later, Lou Willett Staneck specifically defined what was unrealistic about many of the problem novels: a new formula had emerged. She applied John Cawelti's formula for study of popular culture to young adult novels, with the following results: The formula fiction begins with the

[11]Sylvia Engdahl, "Do Teenage Novels Fill a Need?", in Young Adult Literature: Background and Criticism, ed. by Millicent Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood, (Chicago, ALA, 1980), p. 41-48.

[12]Maia Pank Mertz, "The New Realism: Traditional Cultural Values in Recent Young Adult Fiction, Phi Delta Kappan, 60 (October, 1978), p. 102.

[13]Lee Rinsky and Roman Schweikert, "In Defense of the New Realism for Children and Adolescents", Phi Delta Kappan 59 (February, 1977), p. 474.

confronting a problem, some event precipitates a crisis to which the protagonist reacts, and as the protagonist is suffering the consequences of his behavior, a transcendent character steps in and provides insight. The problem is resolved when the protagonist conforms to traditional values and behaviors.[14] She sites as specific examples the books about teenage sex. The girls most often suffered consequences for their behavior: they became pregnant, causing enormous problems for themselves, the boys, and both families. The psychological relationship between the girl and the boy was often undeveloped and the parents were depicted as incompetent or uncaring.[15] Staneck's adaptation of Cawelti's formula can be applied to most types of problem novels of the early 1960's.

DEFINITION OF REALISM

The problem novels, realistic or not, did contribute to the definition of realism. Readers and critics discovered that many books about teenage problems, for which they had been pleading, were not realistic, but were didactic, moralistic tales, or sensationalism. Presentation of a problem did not dictate a realistic novel, unless that problem was dealt with realistically by characters who behaved realistically. This hints that plot and

[14]Lou Willett Staneck, "From Gestation to the Pill," School Library Journal, 19 (December, 1972), p. 35.

[15]Lou Willett Staneck, p. 36-38.

character development must be included as qualities of realistic fiction. Charlotte Huck quotes C.S. Lewis's discussion of realism. He said "reality of presentation" was the art of bringing something close to the reader, making it palpable and vivid by sharply observed or imagined detail, and to achieve this, the plot, characters, setting, world-view, and tone must all contribute.[16]

These qualities may indeed all contribute to a realistic novel, but there is another problem in defining realism. Steele inferred "One man's realism is another man's science fiction."[17] Plot, setting, characters, world-view and tone may seem real to the author, but will they seem real to the reader? Stevenson furthered this idea by writing "...reality, for each of us, is to some extent subjective."[18] It's obvious that not every reader will have had the same experiences as the book characters do. Not every girl has sex and becomes pregnant. Everyone is not orphaned and left to raise a family. Most readers have experienced neither Benjy's lifestyle in Alice

[16]Charlotte Huck, Children's Literature in the Elementary School, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1976), p. 216.

[17]Mary Q. Steele, "Realism, Truth, and Honesty", Horn Book, 47 (February, 1971), p. 17-27.

[18]Gordon Stevenson, "On Constructing Useful Realities: In the Uncertain World of the Adolescent", in Young Adult Literature, ed. by Millicent Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood, (Chicago: ALA, 1980), p. 107-117.

Childress's A Hero Ain't Nothing But a Sandwich, nor Steffie's in Steffie Can't Come Out to Play, by Fran Arrick, yet these books can seem real to the reader.

According to Huck, C.S. Lewis described three kinds of "realism of content" the reader encounters: something that usually happens, something that might conceivably happen, and something that may have happened once.[19] In correspondence with the writer, Betsy Byars expressed a similar opinion about realism. In her letter, which is found in the Appendix of this paper, she said the author is asking the reader to believe not just that something could happen, but that it did. To create such realistic situations, she usually draws upon real experiences she has had or heard about.

The reader's feeling about the total work, especially the combination of plot and characters, must be a feeling of involvement. Realism must make a person think.[20] There must be something in the character, in the situation, that the reader finds in himself. The realistic book cannot be narrow or shallow, because it will not allow the majority of readers to identify and for too many readers the situation will not seem like something that could conceivably happen or did happen. This reflects Dalgleish's earlier statement about books avoiding trite personal problems.

[19]Charlotte Huck, p. 216.

[20]Steele, p. 20.

The key here is that realistic books must deal with the reality a young adult faces, in daily life, but also with the reality humanity faces.[21] Realism transcends social, economic and racial borders to present universal problems. These problems are man's quest for a place and identity for himself in a family, a peer group, and the larger society.[22] Realistic fiction presents an environment in which the young adult can continue his search for identity.

For further use in this paper, realism will be defined as: a combination of characters and situations which will seem possible (real) to the reader and that depict universal problems on an individual level.

CRITERIA FOR REALISM

Evaluating books to see if they meet the definition for realism which has been developed is very subjective and difficult. Donelson, Root, and Wald have separately developed guidelines which make such evaluation less subjective. Although Donelson and Root speak specifically to New Realism and Wald addresses a young adult classic,

[21]Kenneth L. Donelson, "Growing Up Real: YA Literature Comes of Age", in Young Adult Literature, ed. by Millicent Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood. p. 65.

[22]Charlotte Huck, p. 217.

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell, their guidelines are the most realistic presented. Other writers hint at, or deal partially with, the same criteria Root, Donelson, and Wald set down. These criteria can be applied to young adult literature from the 1940's through the 1980's and from them a means for assessing realism can be developed.

Rhoada Wald discusses realistic fiction with the same approach as C.S. Lewis. When reading a realistic book, the reader should be able to say "I have experienced (or could have) this same thing."[23] She includes in her discussion of realistic fiction specific qualities for plot, setting, and characterization.

Wald states that time and setting must be established as the author knows them in the real world, and the narrative must occur at a point in time.[24] Fantasy and futuristic literature is eliminated unless the stories depict time passing at the same rate, and in the same matter, as the authors and readers of the twentieth century experience it. Accordingly, historical fiction could be included.

The portrayal of culture is important to achieve a realistic setting. The material culture includes the buildings, plants, animals, cars, clothes, and food of the characters. The non-material culture is the beliefs,

[23]Rhoada Wald, "Realism in Children's Literature," Language Arts, 52 (October, 1975), p. 938.

[24]Wald, p. 940.

traditions, ideals and feelings of the people, and Wald infers portrayal of non-material culture is absolutely necessary.[25]

Characters in realistic fiction must not be stereotyped, but rounded. There must be exploration of motivation, attitudes, ambivalences, and alternate choices. Growth and change in a character must reflect cause-and-effect behavior, which is dependent upon character development.[26]

The plot develops logically out of the way the characters react to the complex situations; again cause-and-effect behavior. Wald says realism depicts what is possible and plausible in life and because there is a lack of plot in life, realism does not concentrate on symmetry in plot. It is a direct reflection of character development.[27]

One of Wald's major criteria for realism is theme. She believes realism must delve into the value system (non-material culture) upon which the human condition is centered, and her examples for theme in Island of the Blue Dolphins are "need for human companionship" and "strength of the human spirit."[28] Many other situations could be used to

[25]Wald, p. 939.

[26]Wald, p. 940.

[27]Wald, p. 940.

[28]Wald, p. 941.

depict these same themes. Wald means that the human condition must be individualized so that the reader can identify with it, and there are many ways an author can accomplish such individualization. The reader must feel that this state of the human condition is something that he could be involved with; he need not necessarily be the victim but should at least feel empathetic.

Shelton J. Root introduces New Realism as fiction that deals with formerly taboo topics and personal problems.[29] He begins his discussion saying New Realism is not new to adult literature.[30] Literature for adults has changed constantly in language and content, sometimes shocking readers with its treatment of formerly taboo topics. Now changes occurring in adult books are also manifested in young adult books, often shocking adults.

Root believes that young people should confront life through books because of vicarious experience. He believes reading can help young readers rethink and reassess their own values and become more sensitive and humane.[31]

First, Root states that realistic fiction must meet all the basic criteria that any other form of fiction should meet.[32]

[29]Shelton J. Root, Jr. "The New Realism---Some Personal Reflections," Language Arts, (Jan. 1977), p. 19-24.

[30]Root, p. 19.

[31]Root, p. 20

[32]Root, p. 23.

Next, realism should reveal personal and social values central to the culture,[33] which coincides with Wald's portrayal of non-material culture. The reader's understanding of the values which affect the characters' decision making is important.

He specifies that language and syntax should reveal the background and nature of the characters and situations.[34] Obviously a black ghetto reader would not be bluffed by incorrect slang just as a "preppy" could detect any inconsistencies in boarding school language. Correct language institutes authenticity for the reader. Language and syntax could also be considered part of the non-material culture Wald discussed.

New Realism, according to Root, should be honest in its treatment and avoid sensationalism, which concurs with the idea of "trite personal problems" versus portrayal of the human condition.[35] Realism should not dwell on the sensational details of plot in order to shock or entice readers.

New Realism should have faith in the reader to draw conclusions from the evidence presented.[36] Root again is saying books should not sensationalize, but also

[33] Root, p. 23.

[34] Root, p. 23.

[34] Root, p. 23.

[35] Root, p. 23.

hinting at the idea realism must leave the reader something to think about.

In his next criterion, Root states New Realism should "recognize that the young reader is in the process of growing toward adult sophistication, and handle subject matter accordingly."[37] This is a repeat of content contained in Root's other criteria; if a book met Root's other criteria, it would automatically fulfill this one. Also, Root's use of "accordingly" is too subjective. Because of those two faults, this criterion is judged unnecessary and invalid.

The final criterion is that New Realism be written in a hopeful key, but not have an unreal, "happy forever after" ending.[38]

Ken Donelson devotes one chapter of his book Literature for Today's Young Adult to New Realism, in which he suggests criteria for evaluating problem novels, and another chapter to literary aspects of young adult novels, in which he suggests ways of evaluating various elements of young adult literature. His criteria for evaluating problem novels correlate with his means of evaluating the various elements, as he proposes criteria for evaluating setting, plot, characters, style, and theme.

He believes the setting could be either an integral

[37] Root, p. 23-24.

[38] Root, p. 24.

part of the story as in the Cleaver's Where the Lilies Bloom, or it can provide a backdrop for the story,[39] but it must enhance the story and be described as briefly as possible yet still thoroughly enough for the reader to get the intended picture, and facts must concur with real life.[40]

Donelson advocates rich characterization made of characters that will seem real and believable to the reader, which are not cardboard exaggerations of people who are too good or bad,[41] but he does not entirely dismiss the use of stereotypes although he does caution against the use of many, especially for any main characters. He contends that full development of every character would make the book too long and too demanding for a young adult reader.[42] The protagonist and main characters need to be fully developed so that the reader is able to understand why the characters change in personality or behave as they do. The protagonist should be developed so well that if a situation outside the book occurred, the reader could predict how the character would react.[43] To aid in developing characters, the author uses the appropriate language and dialogue for the characters' ages and backgrounds. The

[39]Donelson, p.42.

[40]Donelson, p.183.

[41]Donelson, p. 183.

[42]Donelson, p. 34.

[43]Donelson, p. 33.

goal for character development is to create a character with which the reader can identify and to transport the reader into that person's thoughts and feelings.[44]

The plot must center around characters and problems that are believable, but not be so predictable that the reader becomes disinterested in the outcome because he knows what will happen. Donelson states that young adult readers need to be given a hint early in the book of what is going to happen, or they won't read the book.[45]

The unfolding events of the story should be directly related to the developing characters' decisions and actions. Unlikely coincidences or changes in personalities which the author creates just so the story line works out are unrealistic, just as are exaggerations that result in sensationalism.[46] Conversely, Donelson warns that some authors strive so hard to make the plot and characters realistic that they create case-histories which sound like non-fiction accounts. They don't plan a plot carefully and rely on exciting or over-played events and details to maintain the reader's attention, which again results in sensationalism.[47]

Donelson addresses the author's writing style

[44]Donelson, p. 29.

[45]Donelson, p. 29.

[46]Donelson, p. 183.

[47]Donelson, p. 29.

briefly, noting that the writing should flow smoothly and could quite possibly employ literary devices such as metaphors, symbols, allegories, personification, or similes. The effect of these literary devices form the basis for two other criteria: realism should stimulate the reader to think about the various aspects of the story; the reader should be left with something to think about after he puts the book down.[48] Mary Stolz uses a metaphor several times in Go and Catch a Flying Fish when she compares the fish and Junie, a mother who left her family. Stolz also adeptly uses the symbolism of the underground caves which are dark and cold to represent death in The Edge of Next Year. After visiting those caves, Orin decides he has much to live for. The reader can accept the change in Orin's character without consciously understanding the symbolism. The effective use of literary devices adds more realism by allowing the reader to experience a deeper, more complex level of meaning. Literary devices help provide insight into character motivation, human nature, and feelings.

The deeper level of meaning is directly related to the theme of the novel. Donelson declares "a worthwhile theme" a necessary quality for a problem novel and identifies the concept of theme not as a didactic moral to a story but rather a concept or idea that lingers after the

[48] Donelson, p. 183.

reader has finished the book. A theme is a universal idea that could be applicable to hundreds of books.[49] The theme should be the conclusions or insights about individuals or society with which the reader comes away from the story, and not the author's preachy message.

The three sets of criteria can be summarized as follows:

Wald's criteria

1. The story does not have to fall into the world of the experiential, but has to be plausible.
2. Narrative occurs at a point in time.
3. Time and setting are established as the author knows them.
4. Material and non-material culture is present in the setting, and in beliefs, symbols, ideals and feelings. This culture must be accurately portrayed.
5. Characters are not stereotypes.
6. Realism doesn't concentrate on symmetry of plot, but depicts what is possible in life. Essence of good realistic fiction derives from a developed character.
7. Realistic fiction must deal with a deeper level of meaning; it must reflect and individualize the human condition.

Root's criteria

1. Realistic fiction should meet all basic criteria that other fiction should.
2. It should expose those personal and social values central to the culture, and show how the overt expression of those values may have changed.
3. Language and syntax should help reveal the background and nature of the characters and situations.
4. It should avoid sensationalism and not seek to capitalize on its subject matter.

[49] Donelson, p. 32.

5. Realism should recognize that today's young reader is in the process of growing toward adult sophistication, and handle subject matter accordingly.
6. It should have faith in the intelligence of the reader to draw personal conclusions from the evidence presented.
7. Realism should communicate there is hope in this world.

Donelson's criteria

1. Setting may be either integral to the story or provide a backdrop, but it must enhance the story and give the reader the intended picture.
2. Main characters should definitely be rounded, "alive" characters who seem believable. Stereotyping should be avoided except for very minor characters. The story must possess the power to transport the reader into the character's thoughts and feelings.
3. Writing should be smooth, especially in relation to dialogue. Dialogue must not be forced.
4. Plot must be believable and interesting and be concerned with a real problem a young adult faces, yet it should entice the reader and not be predictable. The subject must not be trendy, because it will appeal to only a small group of readers, and treatment of the subject must avoid sensationalism. Events are directly related to characters' decisions and actions.
5. The reader should be stimulated to think about various aspects of the story. This could be achieved through use of literary devices.
6. The book should handle a worthwhile theme and leave the reader insights into either society or individuals.

Wald's, Root's, and Donelson's criteria coincide on several points. These general areas are setting, characterization, plot, and theme. Table I shows the three viewpoints for setting. Wald and Root both state that portrayal of societal values and culture is important in forming the backdrop of the story.

TABLE I - SETTING

Criteria Proposed by Wald, Root, and Donelson

	Time passes as we know it.	Setting established at a point in time.	Material culture depicted.	Non-material culture depicted.	Role of setting.
Wald	X	X	X	X	
Root			X	X	
Donelson					X

Each set of criteria also addresses characterization. As shown in Table II, Wald and Donelson both advise against stereotyping. Both Root and Donelson discuss using approriate language for the characters, and all three state that values, feelings, and background information are also important to character development.

Both Wald and Donelson believe the plot grows out of characterization. Root and Donelson also discuss avoiding sensationalism of the storyline by carefully constructing the plot. The summary and comparison of the three sets of criteria according to the concept of plot follows, in Table III.

The fourth general concept discussed by Wald, Root, and Donelson is theme. Table IV depicts the comparison of the three according to this concept. Again, Root and Donelson are concerned with sensationalism. All three agree that the theme is more than just the subject or topic of the book.

Wald's and Donelson's criteria fit into the above classifications, but one of Root's criteria remains. The remaining criteria, concerning "realism should handle subject matter accordingly for young readers"[50] has already been discussed and termed redundant and invalid, and will be discarded from discussion at this point.

[50]Root, p. 23.

TABLE II - CHARACTERIZATION

Criteria Proposed by Wald, Root, and Donelson

	Not stereotyped.	Personal values.	Speech and dialogue appropriate.	Culture presented.
Wald	X	X		X
Root		X	X	X
Donelson	X	X	X	

TABLE III - PLOT

Criteria Proposed by Wald, Root, and Donelson

	Plausible; Not necessarily experiential.	Grows from characters' actions and decisions	Avoids sensationalism.	Not too trendy.
Wald	X	X		
Root			X	
Donelson	X	X	X	X

TABLE IV - THEME

Criteria Proposed by Wald, Root, and Donelson

	Deeper level of meaning which reflects and individualizes the human condition.	Optimistic.	Avoids sensationalism.	Provides insights into human nature.	Stimulates thought.
Wald	X				
Root		X	X		X
Donelson				X	X

The following studies and articles by critics of young adult literature substantiate Wald's, Root's, and Donelson's criteria. Again the basis for analysis can be the areas of setting, characterization, plot, and theme.

According to the above criteria, a good description of the setting helps the reader understand the mood, identify with the story, and provide instant validity. If the story is set in the country, or in an inner-city school, accurate descriptions can instantly provide the reader with the necessary background or anticipatory set to become involved. Carlsen states that details must be accurate and authentic.[51] Steele maintains a sentimentalized setting is unrealistic.[52] Flowery, gushy descriptions romanticize the surroundings, creating the wrong mood and unrealistic effect.

Some authors draw upon personal experience when creating settings. Walt Morey says a setting must be accurate and vivid enough to involve the reader in the story and he establishes his settings by writing about places familiar to him. If he is unfamiliar with any detail, he researches it.[53] Vera and Bill Cleaver also draw upon personal experiences, as they write about places they've lived.

[51] G. Robert Carlsen, Criteria for Excellence in Adolescent Literature, U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 155 670, May 1978, p. 3.

[52] Steele, p. 19.

[53] See Appendix for information about Morey's remarks.

For the topic of characterization, the most common concept discussed is the development of credible, "three dimensional characters".[54] The "mean stepmother", kindly grandparents, the perfect parents of the 1950's, and the characters who perform unmotivated yet vital actions in books are examples of adult stereotypes. Use of these can destroy realism.

In her dissertation, Julie Ann Carlson determined four levels of characterization.[55] The lowest, most undeveloped level was "caricature", an exaggerated, comical character. Whereas such a character may add humor, he is inappropriate for even a semi-major role in realistic fiction because only one facet of the personality is presented. Staneck advises against the use of stick figures in realistic fiction, because there are very few all good or all bad people.[56]

Carlson's second level of character development is "stereotype."[57] Portraying the "typical" hood or the "typical" secretary is stereotyping, and should be avoided

[54] John Rowe Townsend, "The Now Child," Horn Book, 49 (June, 1973), p. 243.

[55] Julie Ann Carlson, "A Comparison of the Treatment of the Negro in Children's Literature Between 1929-38 and 1959-68," PhD dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1969, p. 41.

[56] Lou Willett Staneck, "Adults and Adolescents: Ambivalence and Ambiguity", School Library Journal, 99 (February 15, 1974), p. 22.

[57] Julie Ann Carlson, p. 55.

as such characters lack depth because they respond according to pre-conceived ideas the author and reader possess. Staneck points out that the reader must "get inside" the character to know what he is really feeling.[58] Portraying adults as stereotypes is easy and convenient to do because it helps clear them out of the way so the young adult protagonist can develop. But this is unrealistic. Part of the young adult's character development in almost every young adult novel deals with his interraction with adults. The relationships between generations must not be distorted.[59] According to Broderick, "realistic portrayal of relationships between young adults and adults needs to show the ambivalence, a mixture of love and hate, antagonism, and attraction..."[60]

Root advocates the use of language and syntax to help develop a character, and Roberson concurs.[61] Characters must use appropriate phrases, which may include slang.

[58]Staneck, "From Gestation to the Pill", p. 36.

[59]Staneck, "Adults and Adolescents...", p. 21-23.

[60]Dorothy M. Broderick, "The Twelve-Year-Old 'Adult' Reader," Library Journal, 90 (May 15, 1964), p. 2327.

[61]Terri Roberson, "Judy Blume's Forever and Other Novels: Are Teachers Ready For Them?", in Fiction for Adolescents: Theory and Practice, ed. by James E. Davis, U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document 157 082, 1977, p. 36.

Not all young adults speak in the same way, and the author who has them do that is applying a stereotype and destroying the realism of the characters and the novel. Special care is necessary when writing about specific regions.

Staneck's earlier suggestion that the reader must be able to "get inside" the character coincides with Wald's proposed criteria that exploration of motivation and attitudes is important. The reader knows in advance how a stereotype will respond or react, but can explore the motivation behind a realistic, developed character's actions and decisions. Alm cites oversimplification in the way characters change or resolve problems as an unrealistic quality.[62]

Maturity must be developed and not automatically attributed to a character.[63] Both Scharf[64] and Biskin[65] contend that for accurate characterization, decision making and maturation should follow the theory of moral development which was developed at Harvard University by

[62]Richard S. Alm, "The Glitter and the Gold," English Journal, (September, 1955), p. 315-322.

[63]Alm, p. 317.

[64]Peter Scharf, "Moral Development and Literature for Adolescents," Top of the News, (Winter, 1977), p. 131-136.

[65]Donald Biskin and Kenneth Hoskisson, "Moral Development Through Children's Literature," Elementary School Journal, 75 (December, 1974), p. 152-157.

Lawrence Kohlberg.[66] Both Scharf and Biskin interpreted Kohlberg's theory for literature. Their interpretations can be applied to realism.

At Stage 1 of the theory, the character performs tasks necessary to avoid punishment. At Stage 2, the character realizes correct action satisfies his own needs. The individual at Stages 1 and 2 is usually between ages ten and twelve.

At Stage 3, the character feels obligated to be good, because good behavior is what society, especially his family, desires. At Stage 4, the character becomes more conscious of society's rules, and feels a responsibility toward maintaining them. He interprets society's rules according to the letter of the law. Stages 3 and 4 usually occur between ages twelve and sixteen.

Stage 5 is often a time of rebellion because the character sees inconsistencies between the law and his own developing personal values, but he still believes each individual is required to live within the law. At Stage 6 the individual realizes universal principles govern human rights, and believes that it would be justifiable to

[66]Lawrence Kohlberg, "Stage and Sequence," Handbook of Socialization, ed. by Goslin (New York: Russel Sage, 1967), cited by Peter Scharf, "Moral Development and Literature for Adolescents," Top of the News, (Winter, 1977), p. 131-133.

violate a law to prevent an injustice. Stages 5 and 6 may not be reached until age twenty-five or twenty-six.

Table V summarizes the various levels of Kohlberg's theory.

TABLE V

Interpretation of Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development Based on Biskin and Scharf

Stage 1	Character performs tasks necessary to punishment by others. (Under age 10)
Stage 2	Character realizes correct action satisfies his own needs. (Age 10-12.)
Stage 3	Character desires approval of others, so he does what they would want. (Age 12-16)
Stage 4	Character feels a responsiblity toward maintaining society's rules. (Age 12-16)
Stage 5	Character realizes the inconsistencies between the law and his own values, but believes the law should be followed. (Age 16 and up)
Stage 6	Character believes protection of human rights may prevail over law. (Age 16 and up)

Book characters should make decisions according to the preceeding stages and agees, and inconsistencies must be accounted for by the motivation of the character. A five-year-old showing Stage 6 behavior would be unrealistic, but a ten-year-old on Stage 4 would be realistic if motivation and development warrants such behavior.

Carlson's final two levels of character development

are "individuals with race problems," because her dissertation deals with blacks in literature, and "individuals with universal problems."[67] This should be the goal for characterization in realistic fiction. Problems presented should individualize the adolescents' search for an identity yet not be trivial.

Wald maintains that plot must grow out of the charcters' actions, a concept with which Donelson agrees. If characters are well-developed, what happens in the novel depends on them; their decisions dictate what happens next. If not, unrealistic events will occur. Root says the novel should avoid sensationalism, which could grow from a contrived situation or unwarranted magnification of a situation so that its importance overwhelms character development.

The resolution of the problem is a crucial point in a realistic novel. Stavn asserts that if a book is realistic, it won't cop out on the issues it raises.[68] Having the protagonist give up personal beliefs and conform, presenting a fairy tale ending where the problem is magically solved, and leaving the ending entirely open are three ways an author can "cop out."

[67]Carlson, p. 55.

[68]Diane Gersoni Stavn, "Watching Fiction for Today's Teens: notes of a critical voyeur," School Library Journal, 94 (November, 1969) , p. 139-140.

According to Sylvia Louise Engdahl, there is a need for optimism in young adult literature.[69] However, too much optimism severely limits realistic writing. A novel can end happily only if the ending grows directly out of character development. A magically happy ending for a suffering character is unrealistic and not an accurate portrayal of optimism. Snyder believes the situation may be mind-boggling, yet still reflect hope.[70] Engdahl defined optimism and specified how an author could avoid both a depressing ending and one that was "magic." She states that whatever the characters have undergone, whatever griefs they are left with, can amount to optimism, if the characters have grown; if their suffering has been purposeful.[71]

Character development is a necessary quality for realistic fiction, but Wald, Root, and Donelson believe realistic fiction must go further than character motivation. Realism must reflect the human condition from which each specific situation arises. According to Huck, realistic fiction gives insight into human behavior and helps the reader build his own values and concept of self.[72]

[69] Sylvia Louise Engdahl, "Why Write for Today's Teenagers?" Horn Book, 48 (June, 1972), p. 251.

[70] Anne Snyder, p. 11.

[71] Engdahl, p. 251.

[72] Charlotte Huck, "Realistic Fiction," Children's Literature in the Elementary School, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, 1976), p. 217.

Margaret Gillespie also believes realistic fiction goes beyond presentation of characters and problems; she says the problems present in realistic fiction should provide the basis for further thought.[73] Steele's statement which was quoted earlier can be appropriately reused here: Realism must make a person think.[74]

These insights or deeper level thinking of the reader is the manifestation of the theme. It is important, although sometimes difficult, to differentiate between the theme and the problem of a novel. Wald's analysis of Island of the Blue Dolphins accurately differentiates between the two concepts. Karana's main problem was survival. The themes Wald identifies for the book were quoted earlier in this paper as: "need for human companionship," and "great strength of the human spirit".[75]

The theme is not the problem or problems with which the protagonist must deal, but the outcome of the situation. The theme is what the reader learns about humanity, the insights into society and individuals the story provides, and the reader's reactions.

[73] Margaret Gillespie and John W. Conner, Creative Growth Through Literature for Children and Adolescents, Columbus: Merrill, 1975, p. 134.

[74] Steele, p. 20.

[75] Wald, p. 941.

Donelson identifies four themes found in realistic young adult literature:

1. Humanity's essential and eternal loneness.
2. Need for love and companionship.
3. Need for hope and need to search for a truth or truths.
4. Need for laughter.[76]

A theme can be portrayed by an author in many different situations and by many different characters. A theme can be defined as a universal need or problem, depicted through a specific situation in a novel.

Wald's, Root's, and Donelson's suggestions for criteria for realistic fiction are valid because, as shown above, other critics discuss the same ideas or concepts. The major points of emphasis were: a setting that's an accurate portrayal of a culture, well-developed characters, a plot which grows out of the characters' actions and decisions, and a theme which deals not with an individual's specific problems but with a universal need or concept.

[76] Donelson, p. 62.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agee, Hugh. Hackneyed, Acned, Or Just Plain Good: Perceiving Quality in Young Adult Fiction. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 185 549, 1980.

Alm, Richard S. "The Glitter and the Gold." English Journal, 44 (September, 1955), 315-322.

Arksey, Laura. "Books, Children and Moral Values: A Subliminal Approach." Top of the News, 34 (Summer 1973), 375-387.

Arrick, Fran. Steffie Can't Come Out to Play. Scarsdale, New York: Bradbury, 1978.

Babbitt, Natalie. "Between Innocence and Maturity." Horn Book, 48 (February 1972), 33-7.

Biskin, Donald, and Kenneth Hoskisson. "Moral Development Through Children's Literature." Elementary School Journal, 75 (December 1974), 152-157.

Broderick, Dorothy M. "The Twelve-Year-Old 'Adult' Reader." Library Journal, 90 (May 15, 1965), 17-21.

Cameron, Candance. "Let's Tell It Like It Is . . . Changing Values in Children's Literature As Seen in Junior High Fiction." South Dakota Library Bulletin, 55 (April, 1969), 120-3.

Carlsen, G. Robert. Criteria for Excellence in Adolescent Literature. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document 155 670, 1978.

Carlson, Julie Ann. "A Comparison of the Treatment of the Negro in Children's Literature Between 1929-38 and 1959-1968." PhD dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1969.

Carmichael, Carolyn W. Books to Meet the Needs of Teenagers. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 079 709, 1973.

Childress, Alice. A Hero Ain't Nothing But A Sandwich. New York: Coward, 1973.

Dalgliesh, Alice. "Books for Today's Children." New York Librarian, 14 (November, 1934), 129-131.

Donelson, Kenneth L. "Growing Up Real: YA Literature Comes of Age," Young Adult Literature, ed. M. Lenz and Ramona M. Manhood (Chicago: ALA, 1980), 58-67.

Donelson, Kenneth L., and Alleen Pace Nilsen. Literature for Today's Young Adult. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1980.

Douglass, Joseph H. Children's Books and Contemporary Imperatives: A School of Not So Hard Knocks. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 041 707, 1970.

Durrell, Ann. "Goodies and Baddies." Wilson Library Bulletin, 44 (December, 1969), 456-457.

Emery, Anne. "In Defense of the Junior Novel." Top of The News, (May, 1969), 22-25.

Engdahl, Sylvia. "Do Teenage Novels Fill A Need?", Young Adult Literature, ed. M. Lenz and Ramona M. Manhood (Chicago: ALA, 1980), 41-48.

Engdahl, Sylvia. "Why Write for Today's Teenagers?" Horn Book, 48 (June, 1972), 249-254.

Georgiou, Constantine. "Realism in Children's Literature," Children and Their Literature. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1969, p. 359-411.

Good, Margaret. "Stories About Some Family Problems." The School Librarian, 26 (September, 1978), 218-224.

Homze, Alma. Interpersonal Relations in Children's Literature, 1920-1960. U.S., Educational Resource Information Center, ERIC Document ED 011 487, 1966.

Huck, Charlotte. Children's Literature in The Elementary School, 3rd ed. New York: Holt, 1976.

Hutchison, Margaret. "Fifty Years of Young Adult Reading 1921-1971." Top of the News, 30 (November, 1973), 24-52.

Jordan, June. "Young People: Victims of Realism in Books and Life." Wilson Library Bulletin, (October, 1973), 142-145.

Kohlberg, Lawrence. "Stage and Sequence." Handbook of Socialization, ed. by Goslin. New York: Russel Sage, 1967, cited by Peter Scharf. "Moral Development and Literature for Adolescents." Top of the News. (Winter, 1977), p. 131-136.

Krahn, Alice. "Case Against the Junior Novel." Top of the News, (May, 1961), 19-20.

Larrick, Nancy. "Divorce, Drugs, Desertion, the Draft: Facing Up to the Realities in Children's Literature." Publishers' Weekly, 201 (February 21, 1972), 90-91.

MacQuown, Vivian J. "The Teen-age Novel: A Critique." School Library Journal, 11 (April 15, 1964), 34-37.

Martinec, Barbara. "Popular, But Not Just Part of the Crowd: Implications of Formula Fiction for Teenagers." English Journal, 60 (March, 1971), 339-344.

Mertz, Maia Pank. "The New Realism: Traditional Cultural Values in Recent Young-Adult Fiction." Phi Delta Kappan, 60 (October, 1978), 101-105.

Monson, Dianne L. and Bette J. Petola, comp. Research In Children's Literature: An Annotated Bibliography. Delaware: International Reading Association, 1976.

Muller, Al. "Thirty Popular Adolescent Novels." English Journal, (September, 1974), 91-97.

Neville, Emily. It's Like This, Cat. New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

Nordstrom, Ursula. "Honesty in Teenage Novels." Top of the News, (November, 1964), 35-39.

O'Dell, Scott. Island of the Blue Dolphins. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960.

Peck, Richard. "In the Country of Teenage Fiction," Young Adult Literature in the Seventies. ed. Jana Varlejs. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1978.

Perrins, Barbara. "Current Trends in Teenage Literature." Catholic Library World, 43 (November, 1971), 153-159.

Porter, Jane. Reflections of Life Through Books. U.S., Educational Resource Information Center, ERIC Document ED 059 843, 1971.

Raymond, Margaret Thomsen. "Bread for Adolescence.: Horn Book, 11 (Sept.-Oct., 1935), 300-302.

Rinsky, Lee and Roman Schweikert. "In Defense of the New Realism for Children and Adolescents." Phi Delta Kappan, (February, 1977), 472-475.

Roberson, Terri. "Judy Blume's Forever, and Other Novels; Are Teachers Ready for Them?" Fiction for Adolescents: Theory and Practice , ed. James E. Davis. U.S.,Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document 157 082, 1977.

Root, Shelton J., Jr. "The New Realism---Some Personal Reflections." Language Arts, (January, 1977),19-24.

Sacco, Margaret. A Bibliography of Books Dealing With the Problems of Older Children. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 114 081, April 1973.

Scharf, Peter. "Moral Development and Literature for Adolescents." Top of the News, (Winter, 1977), 131-136.

Shapiro, Lillian L. "Quality or Popularity?" School Library Journal, 24 (May, 1978), 23-27.

Staneck, Lou Willett. "Adults and Adolescents, Ambivalence and Ambiguity." School Library Journal, 99 (February 15, 1974),21-25.

_____"From Gestation to the Pill." School Library Journal, 19 (December, 1972), 34-39.

_____"Real People, Real Books: About YA Readers." Top of the News, 31 (June, 1975), 417.

Stavn, Diane Gersoni. "Watching Fiction for Today's Teens: notes of a critical voyeur." School Library Journal, 94 (November, 1969), 139-140.

Steele, Mary Q. "Realism, Truth, and Honesty." Horn Book , 47, 17-27.

Stevenson, Gordon. "On Constructing Useful Realities: in the Uncertain World of the Adolescent." Young Adult Literature.ed. M. Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood, Chicago; ALA, 1980, 107-117.

Townsend, John Rowe. "The Now Child." Horn Book, 49 (June, 1973), 241-247.

Wald, Rhoada. "Realism in Children's Literature." Language Arts, 52 (October, 1975), 939-941.

Weick, Paula M. Adult Portrayal in Novels for Teenage Girls. U.S., Educational Resource Information Center, ERIC Document ED 177 220, 1977.

CHAPTER III

SYNTHESIZED CRITERIA FOR REALISM

Based upon the criteria for realism proposed by Root, Donelson, and Wald, and on the ideas by other critics which substantiate those criteria, the following Criteria for Realism can be synthesized.

1. THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD WHICH SEEMS PLAUSIBLE.

This "world" is not necessarily one which the reader has personally experienced or one which actually existed, but there are several factors which contribute to the believability.

First, the author establishes time and setting by placing the story in a time that the reader will know. Specifically, time (days, months, years) must pass in the same manner and at the same rate as it does in the twentieth century.[1] Historical, futuristic or fantasy literature is eliminated; it cannot be considered "realistic fiction" if it differs from such a portrayal of time.

Second, the author must depict the material culture (places and things) and the non-material culture (ideas,

[1]Wald, p. 939.

beliefs, traditions).

The places and things comprising the non-material culture are homes, schools, clothing, furniture, and food. These must be accurately described. The author must also use the appropriate "localisms" to describe the town or city, surroundings, scenery, which includes the slang or dialect the characters use to describe their surroundings.

The non-material culture must be stated or implied through narrative or the characters' speech and actions. The reader must be presented with evidence of social and personal values, religious or philosophical beliefs, and traditions. Again, it is not necessary for the reader to have the same beliefs as the characters; it is important that enough information be presented for the reader to understand the characters' backgrounds and be able to say, "Yes, I understand how those people live."

2. THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF THE ACTIONS OF WELL DEVELOPED CHARACTERS.

Major characters must be fully developed, neither caricatures nor stereotypes according to Carlson's levels of character development. Stereotypes may be applied only for very minor background figures, but racial and sex role stereotypes must be avoided.[2]

Consistency in a character is shown through his speech and actions. If a character is constantly changing,

[2]Donelson, p. 34.

appropriate motivation for the changes must be shown.

The language a character uses must be appropriate for his age, background, and education.[3] Slang should be used where appropriate, but swearing that's used only to shock or wake up the reader is unrealistic.

Growth and change in a character should come from his actions and decisions, not as if by magic. Overnight changes in a character are unrealistic unless sufficient motivation for such changes is given.[4]

When making decisions, the character should be on the appropriate level of Kohlberg's theory of moral development, as it was interpreted by both Sharf and Biskin. In some situations, however, a character would be forced by the situation to react on a higher level. When this happens, characterization and motivation should be examined to determine if the character is actually capable of such a decision.

The relationships between characters, especially between young adults and adults, must grow out of the characters' personalities.[5] Depicting relationships is another way an author can present well-developed characters and provide the reader with more insight into a character.

[3]Root, p. 20

[4]Donelson, p. 45-47.

[5]Staneck, "Adults and Adolescents...", p. 21-23.

The plot is a series of events through which the protagonist passes. Resolution or magnification of a problem depends upon the characters' decisions and reactions to the events. Each event, or piece of rising action, must seem to the reader like something which could logically happen to the character and must not be simply dropped into the story.

The end of the novel, where the problem or situation may be resolved, should be the outcome of the characters' decisions and actions. A fairy tale, "happily-ever-after" ending is unrealistic, regardless of how much a character has suffered or how deserving he is.[6] The outcome also must coincide with the non-material culture.

The author should not sensationalize by dwelling upon gory details or placing too much emphasis on the events instead of the characters' reactions to them.

3. REALISTIC FICTION PRESENTS A THEME

Realistic fiction must deal with a level of meaning deeper than a character's struggle with a problem. This concept is a theme.

The theme can be a reader's insights into the human condition upon which the story is based, or the theme may be a probe into society's and the reader's values.

Donelson suggested the following four themes which are often found in young adult literature:

[6]Sylvia Louise Engdahl, p. 251.

1. Humanity's essential and eternal loneness.
2. Need for love and companionship.
3. Need for hope and need to search for a truth or truths.
4. Need for laughter.[7]

These themes are universal needs or ideas which are manifested through a character who is searching for identity and struggling with problems he meets on his search.

The author may develop the theme by using literary devices such as metaphors, similes, symbolism.[8]

For further objectivity in book evaluation, numerical value can be assigned each criterion, and the total number of points an evaluator assigns a book then becomes an indicator of the book's realistic qualities. Such an indicator describes not how fine a piece of literature a book is, but strictly how realistic it is. The Criteria for Realism do not specifically judge literary quality.

The first criterion is assigned ten points, whereas the second and third are each worth twenty because of the emphasis placed on the respective areas by readers and critics. This proportion of importance was evidenced in the Review of the Literature Chapter and also in the examination of Root's, Wald's, and Donelson's criteria.

Categories were designated by the writer, based on extensive experimenting with the criteria, and consultation with other professionals.

[7]Donelson, p. 62.

[8]Donelson, p. 183.

Table VI shows the categories assigned to the point totals, and brief definitions of each category.

TABLE VI

Categories of Realism

Total Points Assigned	Category	Description
46 - 50	Extremely Realistic	The book realistically portrays setting, plot, and theme.
40 - 45	Realistic	The book is realistic in most areas.
35 - 39	Marginally Realistic	The book is realistic in some ways, but has either a major unrealistic fault or several minor ones.
Below 34	Unrealistic	The book is not realistic in most areas.

This point system can be used by librarians for selection of materials and whereas application is most useful for work with problem novels, use is not strictly limited to books. The criteria and point system may be applied to situations where realistic fictional audio-visual materials are desired for selection. If realistic fiction is desired for selection, books scoring below thirty-four points should not be selected. Books scoring in the "Marginally Realistic" category are not recommended

for selection, unless specific, unusual need is shown.

The following checklist was developed to aid in the evaluation of realistic qualities in young adult books. The checklist contains the major points of the Criteria of Realism, and provides space for the evaluator to record his comments. An evaluator, however, should carefully analyze and become very familiar with the completeriteria for Realism before attempting to use the abbreviated checklist.

CRITERIA FOR REALISM - CHECKLIST

CRITERION #1:

THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD WHICH SEEMS PLAUSIBLE.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Time passes at the same rate as it does in the twentieth century. (must meet this criterion)	
b. Story is set in a specific era. (1 pt.)	_____
c. Material culture is accurately depicted through any of the following which are appropriate for the story: (4 pts.)	_____
---Homes	
---Schools	
---Food	
---Clothing	
---Furniture	
---Transportation	
---Other buildings, businesses	
d. City, town, or other surroundings are described. (1 pt.)	_____
e. Non-material culture is stated implied through the narration or characters' action and speech. Components of the non-material culture are: (4 pts.)	
---Personal values	_____
---Community or regional social values	
---Religion	
---Philosophical beliefs	
---Traditions	

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

POSSIBLE POINTS: 10 POINTS ASSIGNED:_____

CRITERION #2:

THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF ACTIONS OF WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. *Major characters are neither caricatures nor stereotypes according to Carlson's level of character development. Ideally, they are "individuals with universal problems". (4 pts.)	_____
b. Characters are consistent. (3 pts.)	_____
c. Language is appropriate for characters. (2 pts.)	_____
d. *Decision making follows the appropriate stages of moral development. (1 pt.)	_____
e. Adequate motivation is provided for characters' decisions and actions. (2 pts.)	_____
f. Relationships between characters grow out of characters' personalities. (2 pts.)	_____
g. Plot depends upon characterization. Action doesn't happen as if "by magic". (3 pts.)	_____
h. Outcome of the novel grows from the characters' decisions and actions. (3 pts.)	_____

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED:_____

* For further explanation of these two sections, see following page.

ADDITIONAL EXPLANATION FOR CRITERION #2

1. Carlson's levels of characterization, described on page thirty-four of this paper, and adapted from her dissertation,[9] are used in section "a". They can be briefly summarized as follows:

   Level 1: Lowest level of characterization. Caricature. Comical, stick figure.
   Level 2: Stereotype. Portrayed as "typical", stock character, no real feelings. Labeled.
   Level 3: Individual with a race problem.
   Level 4: Individual with a universal problem. Highest level of characterization.

2. Accurate decision making, as required in section "d" is determined according to an adaptation of Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development[10], as interpreted by Biskin[11] and Scharf[12]. Details are found on page thirty-seven of this paper. Following is a synopsis of the stages:

   Stage 1: Character performs tasks necessary to avoid punishment by others. (Age 10 and under)
   Stage 2: Character realizes correct action satisfies his own needs. (Age 10-12)
   Stage 3: Character performs tasks to gain approval of others. (Age 12-16)
   Stage 4: Character feels a responsibility toward maintaining society's laws. (Age 12-16)
   Stage 5: Character puts laws ahead of own values. (Age 16 and up)
   Stage 6: Character strives to uphold and protect human rights. (Age 16 and up)

[9] Julie Ann Carlson, "A Comparison of the Treatment of the Negro in Children's Literature Between 1929-38 and 1959-68," PhD dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1969, p.41.

[10] Lawrence Kohlberg, "Stage and Sequence," Handbook of Socialization, ed. Goslin, (New York: Russell Sage, 1967) cited by Peter Scharf, "Moral Development and Literature for Adolescents," Top of the News, (Winter, 1977), 131-133.

[11] Donald Biskin and Kenneth Hoskisson, "Moral Development Through Children's Literature," Elementary School Journal, 75 (December, 1974), p. 152-157.

[12] Peter Scharf, "Moral Development and Literature for Adolescents," Top of the News, (Winter, 1977), 131-136.

CRITERION #3

REALISTIC FICTION PRESENTS A THEME

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Theme is a deeper level of meaning than a character's struggle with a problem. (5 pts.)	_____
b. Theme probes values. (4 pts.)	_____
c. Theme deals with universal needs. (4 pts.)	_____
d. Author uses literary devices to present the theme. (2 pts.)	_____
e. Reader is left with something to think about. (5 pts.)	_____

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED: _____

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS FOR REALISM: 50

TOTAL POINTS ASSIGNED THIS BOOK: _____

COMMENTS:

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Biskin, Donald, and Kenneth Hoskisson. "Moral Development Through Children's Literature." Elementary School Journal, 75 (December, 1974), 152-157.

Carlson, Julie Ann. "A Comparison of the Treatment of the Negro in Children's Literature Between 1929-38 and 1959-68." PhD dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1969.

Donelson, Kenneth L., and Alleen Pace Nilsen. Literature for Today's Young Adult. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1980.

Engdahl, Sylvia Louise. "Why Write for Today's Teenagers?" Horn Book, 48 (June, 1972), 245-259.

Kohlberg, Lawrence. "Stage and Sequence." Handbook of Socialization, ed. by Goslin. New York: Russel Sage, 1967, cited by Peter Scharf. "Moral Development and Literature for Adolescents." Top of the News, (Winter, 1977), p. 131-136.

Root, Shelton J., Jr. "The New Realism---Some Personal Reflections." Language Arts, (January, 1977) 19-24.

Scharf, Peter. "Moral Development and Literature for Adolescents." Top of the News, (Winter, 1977), 131-136.

Staneck, Lou Willett. "Adults and Adolescents, Ambivalence and Ambiguity." School Library Journal, 99 (February 15, 1974), 21-23.

Wald, Rhoada. "Realism in Children's Literature." Language Arts, 52 (October, 1975), 939-941.

CHAPTER IV

THE YOUNG ADULT ACCEPTS A PARENTING ROLE IN LITERATURE

BACKGROUND

The specific situation found in literature that was selected for study and analysis was one in which a young adult assumed responsibility for the welfare of others, preferably his siblings. The parents could have been absent, sick, dead, or in some other way incapable of taking care of the youngsters.

Over thirty titles were considered, but several were rejected because they dealt with either a young adult's pregnancy and following parenthood, or with survival in the wilderness, or did not depict a young adult actually parenting. A complete list of suggested titles, with reasons for rejection, appears in Appendix B of this paper.

Twenty-two books were studied, and of these, girls assumed the parenting role in eighteen ; boys in four. In three of those situations involving boys, the protagonists were responsible for younger brothers; in one the boy accepted responsibility for his younger sister. In ten of the books involving female protagonists, girls cared for brothers and/or sisters who were younger than they; in five

books they were responsible for younger and older children. Lydia took care of/ and taught her retarded twin sister in the Cleaver's Me, Too, and Littabelle cared for her grandparents in the Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee, also by the Cleavers.

Adults and parents were incapable of performing their parenting duties for a variety of reasons. In six books, both parents were dead; in four books one parent was dead. Two parents were alcoholics, and fifteen parents had either abandoned their children or in some way shirked responsibility. There were single-parent situations in fifteen of the novels.

Seven of the families were totally poverty stricken and lack of money was a cause of a parent's absence in five novels. In several others, the parents' absence caused a lack of money which in turn caused more problems for the protagonist.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The Criteria for Realism can be applied to this type of literature, with special emphasis placed on evaluation of character development of the protagonist and on resolution of the problem. These two areas are critical to the overall realism of such novels. The situation precipitating the young adult taking over parenting responsibilities should also be scrutinized.

In this chapter, an overview of the analysis and ratings of the twenty-two novels will be presented. Tables will show the books' ratings according to the categories developed in Chapter III, and then give the breakdown of ratings for each Criterion.

Following this overview, the analysis and evaluation procedure will be demonstrated by an analysis of six of the highest ranking novels.

TABLE VII

EXTREMELY REALISTIC NOVELS
46 - 50 POINTS

TITLES	POINTS
Under the Haystack-Engebrecht	50
Edge of Next Year -Stolz	48
The Masquerade-Shreve	48
What Time of Night Is It?-Stolz	46
Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee-Cleaver	46
Go and Catch a Flying Fish-Stolz	46
Tex-Hinton	46

TABLE VIII

REALISTIC NOVELS
40 - 45 POINTS

TITLES	POINTS
Father Figure-Peck	45
Me Too -Cleaver	44
For the Love of Jody -Branscum	44
Girl Who Owned A City-Nelson	44
Broken Promise-Hayes	44
Home Before Dark -Bridgers	44
Liberation of Tansy Warner -Tolan	43
The Night Swimmers -Byars	43
Where the Lilies Bloom -Cleaver	43
Trial Valley -Cleaver	42
William -Hunt	40

TABLE IX

MARGINALLY REALISTIC NOVELS
35 - 39 POINTS

TITLES	POINTS
Don't Look and It Won't Hurt -Peck	38
Emma's Island -Arundel	36

TABLE X

UNREALISTIC NOVELS
BELOW 34 POINTS

TITLES	POINTS
Amethyst Summer -Bradbury	32
Get A Little Lost, Tia -Wood	26

When the novels are analyzed according to each criterion, several generalizations can be formed. First, most of the novels depict realistic settings. Criterion #1 is worth ten points, and fourteen of the novels were awarded the maximum. Only the two lowest-overall novels received low ratings for this criterion. Table XI shows the points awarded each novel for Criterion #1.

TABLE XI

POINTS ASSIGNED FOR CRITERION #1
"The author creates a world which seems possible"
10 POINTS POSSIBLE

TITLES	POINTS
Under the Haystack -Engebrecht	10
Edge of Next Year -Stolz	10
The Masquerade -Shreve	10
What Time of Night Is It? -Stolz	10
Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee -Cleaver	10

TABLE XI (Continued)

TITLES	POINTS
Go and Catch A Flying Fish-Stolz	10
Me Too-Cleaver	10
For the Love of Jody-Branscum	10
Broken Promise-Hayes	10
Girl Who Owned A City-Nelson	10
Home Before Dark-Bridgers	10
Where the Lilies Bloom-Cleaver	10
Trial Valley-Cleaver	10
Night Swimmers-Byars	10
Tex-Hinton	8
William-Hunt	8
Don't Look and It Won't Hurt-Peck	8
Emma's Island-Arundel	8
Liberation of Tansy Warner -Tolan	8
Father Figure -Peck	8
Amethyst Summer-Bradbury	6
Get A Little Lost, Tia-Wood	5

Low ratings for Criterion #2, "The plot grows out of the actions of well-developed characters" generally are based on lack of character motivation and lack of well-drawn relationships between characters. The parents are extremely important in this type of novel because their absence is usually crucial to the entire story. Yet in

The Night Swimmers and Home Before Dark they are under-developed.

Table XII depicts the points assigned for Criterion #2.

TABLE XII

POINTS ASSIGNED FOR CRITERION #2
"The plot grows out of the actions of well-developed characters"
20 POINTS POSSIBLE

TITLES	POINTS
Under the Haystack -Engebrecht	20
The Masquerade -Shreve	20
Tex -Hinton	19
Father Figure -Peck	19
What Time of Night Is It? -Stolz	18
Edge of Next Year -Stolz	18
Liberation of Tansy Warner -Tolan	17
Me Too -Cleaver	17
Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee -Cleaver	17
Go and Catch a Flying Fish -Stolz	16
Where the Lilies Bloom -Cleaver	16
Home Before Dark -Bridgers	16
For the Love of Jody -Branscum	16
William -Hunt	15
Don't Look and It Won't Hurt -Peck	15
Broken Promise -Hayes	15

TABLE XII (Continued)

TITLES	POINTS
Trial Valley -Cleaver	15
Night Swimmers -Byars	14
Emma's Island -Arundel	14
Girl Who Owned A City -Nelson	13
Amethyst Summer -Bradbury	12
Get A Little Lost, Tia -Wood	12

Character and plot development is more often less realistic than is the presentation of a theme. Many novels assigned 40 - 44 points have higher ratings for Criterion #3 (theme) than for Criterion #2 (characterization and plot development). Most of the novels attempt to present a theme, and Table XIII points out that eighteen of the novels studied do a good job. Again, the two lowest overall scoring novels receive the fewest points for this Criterion.

TABLE XIII

POINTS ASSIGNED FOR CRITERION #3
"Realistic Fiction presents a theme"
20 POSSIBLE POINTS

TITLES	POINTS
Under the Haystack -Engebrecht	20
Go and Catch A Flying Fish -Stolz	20
Edge of Next Year -Stolz	20
Broken Promise -Hayes	19
Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee -Cleaver	19
Night Swimmers -Byars	19
Girl Who Owned A City -Nelson	19
For Love of Jody -Branscum	18
Home Before Dark -Bridgers	18
Liberation of Tansy Warner -Tolan	18
What Time of Night Is It? -Stolz	18
Father Figure -Peck	18
Tex -Hinton	18
The Masquerade -Shreve	18
William -Hunt	17
Where the Lilies Bloom -Cleaver	17
Me Too -Cleaver	17
Trial Valley-Cleaver	17
Don't Look and It Won't Hurt -Peck	15
Emma's Island -Arundel	14
Amethyst Summer -Bradbury	10
Get A Little Lost Tia -Wood	9

Books assigned 43 - 44 points had common realistic qualities: well-developed protagonists involved with a problem, well-described settings, presentation of a "coping" or "survival" type theme. The books assigned 45 - 50 points were more realistic because they each present several well-developed characters, relationships between characters, and more universal themes. Those novels with higher ratings present more than just a person taking care of others. They show universal needs and a person's quest for an identity; a place for himself in the world.

Concluding the general discussion of novels in which young adults accept parenting roles, one can say that the majority of those novels are realistic.

To provide an example of how to use the Criteria for Realism, six of the most realistic novels will be analyzed. Those six titles are Under the Haystack by Ungebrecht, The Edge of Next Year by Stolz, The Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee by the Cleavers, The Masquerade by Shreve, Tex by Hinton, and Go and Catch a Flying Fish by Stolz.

UNDER THE HAYSTACK

Under the Haystack by P. A. Ungebrecht is a story of desertion. Thirteen-year-old Sandy attempts to manage a farm and take care of her two younger sisters when her mother and step-father run off. Sandy's main concern, beyond survival, is making things look "normal" to the neighbors and townspeople. She fears that if people know the girls have been deserted, they will call the authorities and the girls will be separated into foster homes. Sandy, Marie, and June milk the cows and pick berries and beans to maintain an income.

At first, Sandy tells her sisters that their mother is taking care of a sick aunt. But the younger girls discover the truth; their mother has left with their step father, whom they hate. Sandy can't believe that her mother really loves this guy, or that he really loves the mother.

Sandy also realizes that she herself is changing. She has her first period, her old clothes do not fit properly, she finds that when they order new clothes she must order from the women's sizes, and she has new feelings for the boy next door, Joe Baxter.

One evening when Sandy is depressed and worrying

about the future, she meets Mrs. Baxter down by the river. Mrs. Baxter knows that Sandy's mom is gone, and she tells Sandy about a time when she ran away from her own family. This helps Sandy understand her mother's actions.

The neighbors become more and more suspicious, and one day the girls hide in the bushes while the sheriff comes to investigate. The next day as they prepare for the sheriff's return, their mother comes home, alone.

Under the Haystack can be evaluated according to the Criteria for Realism.

1. THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD WHICH SEEMS PLAUSIBLE.

Engebrecht creates a small town, rural setting and focuses on the tiny "world" of three girls and their attempts to survive. Probably few readers have been deserted as the girls in the book are, but the girls' feelings toward their home, family, and pets are plausible and something with which most readers could identify.

The time in which the story is set is ambiguous, but the ambiguity leads to a more universal reality than would have been present had the story been set in a specific year. Clues such as the cars, electricity, and the factory to which the parents commute place the story anytime between 1950 and the present day. The small, rural town setting also contributes to the ambiguity of time. Most people expect small town life to be slower and a bit old-fashioned when contrasted with city life. The country

store and its proprietor are the kind found in many books and movies and add to the rural setting, and to the ambiguity of time.

Sandy and her sisters live on a run-down farm with no running water, and few other conveniences. That is not surprising, considering the parents' attitude toward the farm. This lifestyle is believable and realistic. Because of their parents, the girls' lifestyle is out of harmony with even small-town life, and especially out of harmony with the contemporary American world--the world to which the parents escaped.

The material culture and non-material culture are accurately portrayed. Life on a run-down farm is difficult, backbreaking, and often depressing. Careful details are used to depict the physical and psychological aspects of the girls' life. Details such as the girls' delight in mail order clothes and the cupcakes at the general store contribute to the small-town believability!

Engebrecht was careful in writing about the girls' survival. Wouldn't people who did business with the farm become suspicious? No. Engebrecht carefully describes how the girls had always done the milking and had set the milk jugs down by the road for the dairy to pick up. Sandy had previously endorsed checks and cashed them for her mother. The parents had always maintained low profiles and hence weren't missed.

One incident, which would be included as part of the non-material culture of rural life, doesn't seem authentic. In a gruesome accident Marie drives a pitchfork deep into her leg. Sandy carries her to the doctor, where she is treated. She doesn't have to fill out a patient record form, and the girls manage to escape even though the doctor says he wanted to speak to their mother. Even in a small town, patients fill out accident reports and records for the doctor's files, and it's strange that neither the doctor nor the receptionist knew the girls, or, recognizing them as strangers, didn't ask more questions about where they lived. Small town people would be more nosey about such an accident.

The social values expressed here are very traditional. The girls are concerned with being honest, sticking together, and not taking charity. They know the neighbors would go to the authorities if they knew the girls had been abandoned. The help your neighbor value is evidenced through Mrs. Baker, the neighbor who sneaks baskets of food to the girls.

Because of the description of rural life, the portrayal of the material culture which supports the description of that life, and the presentation of values, Under the Haystack earns ten points, out of a possible ten, for the first criterion.

2. THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF THE ACTIONS OF WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS.

The major characters are Sandy, Marie (age 8), and June (age 6). Minor characters are Mrs. Baxter, Joe Baxter, the mother and stepfather, and Mr. Samuels at the general store.

Mr. Samuels is the only character, who, by Carlson's standards, is a stereotype. As mentioned earlier, he is a firm, yet kindly storekeeper who extends "specials" to the girls. His stereotyped role is justified however. He is part of the backdrop of the story. Engebrecht does give readers the background of his relationship with Sandy.

Joe Baxter has been a friend of Sandy's for four years, and now this friendship starts to develop into a romance. His devotion as a friend and the possibility of him becoming Sandy's boyfriend provide evidence of Sandy's maturation and add more depth to the book. This is not just a story of survival, but also of growing up.

Mrs. Baxter is a minor character whom the girls see as a nosey neighbor and a threat to their secret. She sneaks baskets of food over to them. However, she is developed beyond the level of "kindly neighbor" and turns out to be very crucial to Sandy's growth. In one scene, Mrs. Baxter and Sandy meet down by the river. She becomes the only person to whom Sandy can express her hate for her mother, her fears for the future, and her growing pains. Sandy learns that Mrs. Baxter ran away once but came back

because she realized how important her family was to her, how important she was to her family, and that their love made her whole. In this scene Sandy learns about possible motivation for her mother's leaving, and is able to accept her mother as a person. This scene foreshadows the ending of the book and justifies for Sandy her mother's eventual return.

The three girls are hard-working and devoted to their farm and their life together. There are many disappointments and trying times, like when the garden fails, the cows get loose, and the outing when they are threatened by a bull. Each girl reacts differently, and consistently for her characterization, to these situations.

The girls' decisions and attitudes can be analyzed according to Kohlberg's theory of moral judgement. June, the six-year-old, has been doing heavy chores and milking for two years. She is extremely tough. At first, she resents Sandy's authority because she still loves her mother, expects her mother to return, and does not view the chores as a means of survival. She learns quickly that she must do the chores or risk punishment. She is functioning at Kohlberg's Stage 1; she obeys in order to avoid punishment, and also at Stage 2; her actions fulfill her needs. As the story progresses she becomes responsible for her own well-being. Her own actions satisfy her needs. These stages are appropriate for her age. June's reaction when

she finds out that her mother is not helping a sick aunt is consistent with her characterization. She feels rejected when she learns her mother has actually left her. She lashes out at Sandy, because she feels Sandy is somehow responsible. Sandy has tried to protect her from this knowledge, so in June's eyes the whole affair is Sandy's fault. June is silent for a few days as she deals with her new feelings.

Marie, age eight, is suspicious about the real reason their mother is gone, but doesn't question Sandy because she realizes she must keep the secret from June. Marie is the spunkiest of the three girls. She likes to tease June and bait Sandy's temper. She douses the neighbor's dog and then laughs behind the irate neighbor's back. She is more daring than Sandy, and much more cynical, probably because she doesn't feel the burden of responsibility that Sandy does. Marie is also the bravest of the three girls. When she is hurt with the pitchfork she never whimpers, and when the girls hear something rustling outside their house she grabs a stick and is ready for assault. She changes in her attitude toward work, as June does. At first, Marie tries to get by slopping through the chores and not doing thorough work, but she learns she will be punished by Sandy and have to do the job all over again. Later she does a good job because she realizes it is a

means of survival. She moves from Kohlberg's Stage 1 to Stage 2, which is appropriate for her age, and an appropriate change. She is able to comprehend the situation and the problems of survival, able to carry out her duties, but when something goes wrong she is cynical or shifts the guilt to others. She cannot fully accept responsibility for determining her own future. Considering her age, this characterization is accurate.

Twelve-year-old Sandy is the master-mind and decision maker. She operates at Kohlberg's Stage 1, Stage 2, and also at Stage 3; she desires approval, and Stage 4; she feels responsible for maintaining rules. She carries the full responsibility for her and her sisters' survival and exhibits Stage 3 behavior in her dealings with her neighbors and Stage 4 behavior in her honesty, her willingness to stand up to the bully. She is not willing to "bend" what she conceives to be society's rules. She won't accept welfare, and won't cheat or steal, even in her dire situation.

As protagonist, Sandy is the most fully developed character of the story. She automatically accepts her parenting role, disciplining her sisters when necessary. She doesn't allow herself any time for leisure. Halfway through the story she realizes she is growing up. She desperately wants to be loved. She wants to explore her feelings for Joe, to go to dances like other kids, yet in

the midst of these thoughts and dreams she must think about money, food, and shelter. She realizes she is being cheated out of the time she needs to grow up.

Through Sandy's thoughts, the mother is developed as a mixed-up person searching for love. The step-father is intentionally portrayed as a totally evil person, perhaps even a potential child abuser. This stereotyped characterization is justified because he's seen strictly through Sandy's eyes.

The title, Under the Haystack, refers to how Sandy, Marie, and June would build tunnels and hide in the barn under the haystack to get away from "him", their step-father. As time passes, the girls are forced to feed the hay to the cows, and eventually they no longer have a place to hide. Simultaneously Sandy gains insights into herself, her mother and stepfather, families and life, and she no longer needs the haystack, under which to hide.

The plot does grow out of the characters' actions because everything that happens is a result of the girls' fight for survival. The parents' absence is very realistic, because of their implied attitudes toward the girls and the farm. Sandy's immediate acceptance of the parenting role is also realistic, as the reader can infer from Sandy's characterization. Because she is independent and determined to save what family she has, it is natural for her to become the authority figure.

The mother's return is not a pat ending nor a simple solution to the girls' problem. This event was foreshadowed earlier in the story during Sandy's conversation with Mrs. Baxter, during which Mrs. Baxter explains possible motivation for the mother's actions.

The girls greet their mother with actions consistent with their characterization. Young June has missed her mother's presence and can instantly forgive her because she needs and wants a mother's love. Marie will forgive her mother eventually, although her first thoughts are just as cynical as others she'd had during the story. Sandy has been struggling with her own feelings toward responsibility and can identify with her mother on a person to person basis instead of on a mother to daughter level, where a mother should be ever present and ever loving. Sandy can somewhat understand her mother's feelings, yet she is still enough of a child that she has been deeply hurt by her mother's actions, and forgiveness is difficult. She also knows that she and her mother need each other and can therefore accept her return.

Because each character was fully developed and because the action of the story grew directly out of the characterization, Under the Haystack earns twenty points for this criterion.

3. REALISTIC FICTION PRESENTS A THEME

This novel is not merely a story of survival, but a

story of a girl's acceptance of responsibility, of growing up, acceptance and awareness of others and their needs, and of a girl's loneliness and following realization that she needs companionship and mothering. This book questions a mother's behavior and recognizes that mother as a person with needs and problems. Yet this novel is not just a story of personal problems. Sandy's problems were not unique to her; they are the problems all adolescents deal with during maturation.

Donelson suggested four themes for young adult literature, and all four apply to this novel.[1] "Humanity's essential and eternal loneness" is depicted through Sandy's realization that although it was painful, she needed time to sort out her feelings. "Need for love and companionship" was a need that each character exhibited. Marie and June especially needed each other and their mother's love. "Need for home and need to search for truth" sums up the essence of Sandy's character. Had she not come to terms with her feelings about her mother's absence, she could not have accepted her mother's return. Before she could figure out how she felt about her mother, she had to mature, develop her own values, and question her own existence. Mrs. Baxter and Sandy's mother also had done some searching for truth. Marie and June recognize Donelson's fourth theme "Need for laughter" sooner than Sandy does. They are younger and more prone to play,

[1]Donelson, p. 62.

while Sandy tries to assume the most authoritative role she possibly can. She does come to realize that she's missing out on the fun of being a kid, but long after the reader has realized it. The reader can see Sandy's life becoming grimmer before she actually matures enough to handle the situation.

The changes in the characters provide the optimistic outlook of the book. Everything has not worked out perfectly but the protagonist has made tremendous growth and will be able to function in the new situation.

Under the Haystack more than sufficiently meets the requirements of the third criterion and receives twenty points.

The total number of points assigned to Under the Haystack is 50, making it the highest rated novel studied and the only novel to earn a perfect score. According to analysis by the Criteria for Realism, this novel is extremely realistic.

CRITERIA FOR REALISM - CHECKLIST

CRITERION #1:

THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD WHICH SEEMS PLAUSIBLE.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Time passes at the same rate as it does in the twentieth century. (must meet this criterion)	
b. Story is set in a specific era. (1 pt.)	1
c. Material culture is accurately depicted through any of the following which are appropriate for the story: (4 pts.) ---Homes ---Schools ---Food ---Clothing ---Furniture ---Transportation ---Other buildings, businesses	4
d. City, town, or other surroundings are described. (1 pt.)	1
e. Non-material culture is stated implied through the narration or characters' action and speech. Components of the non-material culture are: (4 pts.) ---Personal values ---Community or regional social values ---Religion ---Philosophical beliefs ---Traditions	4

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Farm life accurately described; believable.
Deteriorating farm compounds the girls' predicaments; adds to story.
Non-material culture depicted by Mrs. Baxter, Mr. Samuels, Joe Baxter, the girls.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 10 POINTS ASSIGNED: 10

CRITERION #2:

THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF ACTIONS OF WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Major characters are neither caricatures nor stereotypes according to Carlson's level of character development. Ideally, they are "individuals with universal problems". (4 pts.)	4
b. Characters are consistent. (3 pts.)	3
c. Language is appropriate for characters. (2 pts.)	2
d. Decision making follows the appropriate stages of moral development. (1 pt.)	1
e. Adequate motivation is provided for characters' decisions and actions. (2 pts.)	2
f. Relationships between characters grow out of characters' personalities. (2 pts.)	2
g. Plot depends upon characterization. Action doesn't happen as if "by magic". (3 pts.)	3
h. Outcome of the novel grows from the characters' decisions and actions. (3 pts.)	3

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Characters, especially Sandy, are well-developed. Her growth is well-planned.
Relationships are done well. Sandy's bitterness for her stepfather comes across well.
the outcome does not ruin the rest of the novel. It is plausible, because of Sandy's conversation with Mrs. Baxter and because of her growth.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED: 20

CRITERION #3

REALISTIC FICTION PRESENTS A THEME

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Theme is a deeper level of meaning than a character's struggle with a problem. (5 pts.)	5
b. Theme probes values. (4 pts.)	4
c. Theme deals with universal needs. (4 pts.)	4
d. Author uses literary devices to present the theme. (2 pts.)	2
e. Reader is left with something to think about. (5 pts.)	5

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Reader is left to think about Sandy's change, the future for the girls and their mother, responsibility, concept of family.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED: 20

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS FOR REALISM: 50

TOTAL POINTS ASSIGNED THIS BOOK: 50

COMMENTS:

Extremely realistic novel.
Enjoyable, thought-provoking.

EDGE OF NEXT YEAR

In the Edge of Next Year Orin Woodward must face the brutal reality that his mother is dead, his father is quickly becoming an alcoholic, and that his and his little brother's futures are uncertain.

When the Woodward family was returning home from dinner in a restaurant, a car skidded and crashed into their car, killing Rose Woodward. In the following months, Orin's younger brother Vic escapes reality by spending all of his time with his pet snakes and salamanders. Mr. Woodward escapes by drinking. Only Orin has no escape. To care for Vic and to do shopping and housework, he must give up after-school basketball. The Woodwards had been a close knit family with few friends, so when Orin can't communicate his feelings with his family, there is no one else in whom he can confide.

Orin begins to detest his father because he is constantly in a drunken stupor and often passes out from his drunken state. One morning Orin finds his dad passed out in the barn where he had parked the car but had been unable to walk as far as the house. Orin goes to the house, builds a pyramid of beer and booze bottles, leaves his dad a sarcastic note, and takes Vic on an adventure to

some underground caves Vic had always wanted to explore and Orin knew were off-limits.

When they arrive home, Mr. Woodward has cleaned himself up and has talked with two men from Alcoholics Anonymous. He tells his sons he is ready to quit drinking and start living again.

This novel was chosen for this study because of the way Mr. Woodward abandons his two sons even though he's still living in the same house with them, and because of the way Orin takes on the responsibility of taking care of Vic and the household. Following is the analysis and evaluation of Edge of Next Year according to the Criteria for Realism.

1. THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD WHICH IS PLAUSIBLE

The setting is the modern countryside with the story happening in the 1970's or 1980's. Orin's mother had hated cities, so the family had purchased an old picturesque farm in the country. The boys go to school in the nearby town and Mr. Woodward commutes about an hour to the city where he is a journalist. This is a very common place and life-style, with which most readers could identify.

Mrs. Woodward had been very nonmaterialistic so the house is not filled with video games, stereos, television sets, or electrical appliances. Books, nature, and the family had been important to Mrs. Woodward. Victor collects animals, especially amphibians, the way most kids collect

baseball cards. That is the extent of the material culture of the Woodward family. They had been proud of being different from other people.

The difference between the Woodward family and other middle-class families is acutely displayed when Orin visits Jeanie Sager's house. It was brick, with a "rhododendron outside and philodendron inside" (p. 125). Everything was new and shiny, and Orin knew how his mother would shudder if she could see them.

Jeanie Sager belonged in that house, just as the Woodwards belonged in theirs, and those houses become symbolic of the non-material culture. A simple, natural lifestyle, as reflected by the lack of material possessions, was important to the Woodwards, but the Sagers were social climbers out to "keep up with the Joneses."

Mrs. Stolz vividly captures Orin's and Vic's personalities when she describes their reactions to the caves they visit near the end of the story. Through Stolz's careful description of the caves the reader better understands the characters. The caves are an integral part of the story.

Because of the correlation between characters and setting, and of the description of the setting, Edge of Next Year is assigned the total possible 10 points for this criterion.

2. THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF THE ACTIONS OF WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS

Mrs. Woodward dies at the beginning of the book but she is a very important character who has strongly influenced her family. She was the family member who insisted on a simple, country life. She enjoyed birdwatching and being alone and detested jewelry, cosmetics, and clothing.

Victor is much like his mother and they both fit perfectly into the setting. Victor loves to explore and to collect animals. He does not want, nor need, human friends outside his family. He is able to shut out the pain of his mother's death through his interaction with the environment and acts as if he doesn't recognize his father's drinking. Vic is described by his father as being "oddly self-sufficient" and "eerily-intelligent" (p. 161) so his father assumes him able of taking care of himself.

According to Carlson's criteria, Victor is neither a caricature nor a stereotype. Although he may appear flat and undeveloped because of his ignorance of his father's condition, he is not. That ignorance is part of his characterization. Vic believes that deep down his father loves him and he can accept his father's drinking as a reaction to death that he will someday outgrow. Vic is a very optimistic person.

Vic demonstrates Stage 2 behavior according to Kohlberg's theory of moral development, evidenced by his

self-sufficiency. At Stage 2 characters realize that their actions provide for their survival, and mentally, that's exactly what Vic does. He copes. He also is cognizant of right and wrong behavior according to society's standards, which is Stage 4 and Stage 5 behavior. He comments about how in the animal world, individuals don't go around killing each other unless it is for survival, and contrasts that to his mother's senseless death. He sees the inconsistencies between his values and the way society works, and realizes he prefers the animal world's society. His attitudes should not be interpreted as fantasy or as evidence that he's out of touch with the real world, because he isn't. He has developed his own set of values and beliefs and finds they are out of place in the human society. Again, this is Stage 5 behavior.

According to Scharf's interpretation of Kohlberg's theory which was discussed on page thirty-eight of this papaper, a person operating at Stages 4 and 5 should be between ages 12 and 16. Victor is a little young for those stages, but based on his background of independence and the current situation in his family, such characterization is realistic.

Mr. Woodward is seen mostly from Orin's point of view. He is not well-developed, but he also is not simply stereotyped. He had loved his life with his wife, and now the things they had believed in together are gone.

Presumably, this is why he drinks. Stolz discusses his feelings in only a few incidents, but his characterization is consistent.

Orin is the protagonist who feels the burden of responsibility almost immediately after his mother's death, as he quickly assumes housekeeping and cooking chores for the family. His feelings are complex, an indicator of good characterization. At times he resents his brother's interest in animals, but at other times he envies his brother's escape. Sometimes he feels sorry for his dad, but other times he despises him. Orin feels helpless and confused and angry.

Orin respects his English teachers, but when the teacher wants to make changes in a poem Orin has written about his mother's death, Orin drops the subject and escapes. The teacher is not understanding Orin's motivation in writing the poem. Orin wants to neither accept the teacher's ideas nor stand up for his own. According to Kohlberg's theory, Orin's behavior is Stage 4.

Orin takes Victor on the dangerous trip to the caves to defy his father, exert his independence, and escape reality. In the underground caverns he comes to terms with himself and realizes how much he values life. He is, according to Carlson, a character in the highest category of development: he is an individual with universal problems. He must find meaning for his life.

The only other character, Jeanie Sager, is terrifically stereotyped as a spoiled little rich girl, whose major concern is getting a boyfriend. She serves as an example of how people get carried away with their own trivial problems, when compared to Orin and the problems he faces. She is an example of an effective use of a stereotype. The reader can immediately recognize what kind of a person she is and anticipate Orin's reaction to her. She adds humor to the book.

The plot grows out of one event: Rose Woodward's death. Stolz even foreshadows her death in Chapter 1 when Vic and Orin discuss the wasps' death. Vic tells Orin the wasps are having one last binge before they die (p. 5.). The Woodwards are having one last fall fling in the orchard before Mrs. Woodward's death.

The plot then depends upon characterization and is therefore very realistic. Orin's interaction with Vic, and lack of interaction with his father provide the basis for the rising action. Sometimes Orin has such a difficult time accepting himself that he cannot at all accept Vic. Vic even becomes, momentarily, one of his own monsters (p. 57) in Orin's eyes.

Stolz also successfully uses flashbacks to inject a feeling for the characters' backgrounds into the plot. Again, Mrs. Woodward's personality and influence upon her family is depicted.

The plot builds in suspense to the climax: the trip to the caves. In the deep, dark caves which symbolize dreariness and death, Orin comes to terms with his mother's death and for the first time is able to talk with Vic about the tragedy and their father. This trip is a most appropriate event to follow all of the unvented emotions and troubles Orin has faced. While in the caves he discovers what kind of a person he is (identity) and how much he has to live for.

The book could easily end with the cave scene but Stolz has the boys return home to discover that their father has also done some soul-searching. This sudden change is not totally convincing because the father's character has not been developed enough for the reader to think him capable of such a decision. Two things save the ending from ruining the book. First, Stolz had previously allowed the reader some insight into the father's confused feelings. On the previous evening the father had realized the problems his drinking was causing and had contemplated several solutions. Stopping drinking was one considered solution. Second, the father only <u>says</u> he will quit; he has not magically stopped.

Because of the slightly weak characterization of the father, <u>Edge of Next Year</u> is assigned 18 out of a possible 20 points for Criterion #2.

3. REALISTIC FICTION MUST PRESENT A THEME.

The Edge of Next Year earns 20 points for Criterion #3. The symbolism of the dark underground caves with Vic, who is meek and innocent, guiding his older brother back to daylight is an excellent technique Stolz uses to take the reader to a level of meaning deeper than characterization. Orin reaches the world of daylight with a new identity and a new outlook on life.

While the theme dwells on Orin's search for identity, overcoming hurt and pain is also probed. Everyone deals with his hurt differently, and overcoming this hurt takes time. While a person deals with this hurt, others around him may be affected. The Edge of Next Year addresses this theme.

The total numerical indicator of realism for this novel is 48, which places it in the "Extremely Realistic" category. The setting is not only plausible but also symbolic; the themes are substantial and universal; the only deterrent from the realism of the book could be the slightly weak characterization of the father.

The Edge of Next Year

CRITERIA FOR REALISM - CHECKLIST

CRITERION #1:

THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD WHICH SEEMS PLAUSIBLE.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Time passes at the same rate as it does in the twentieth century. (must meet this criterion)	
b. Story is set in a specific era. (1 pt.)	1
c. Material culture is accurately depicted through any of the following which are appropriate for the story: (4 pts.) ---Homes ---Schools ---Food ---Clothing ---Furniture ---Transportation ---Other buildings, businesses	4
d. City, town, or other surroundings are described. (1 pt.)	1
e. Non-material culture is stated implied through the narration or characters' action and speech. Components of the non-material culture are: (4 pts.) ---Personal values ---Community or regional social values ---Religion ---Philosophical beliefs ---Traditions	4

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

The setting reflects the characters' attitudes toward life and death.
Effective contrast: Sager's home and Woodward's home.
Symbolic use of caves gives good effect.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 10 POINTS ASSIGNED: 10

The Edge of Next Year

CRITERION #2:

THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF ACTIONS OF WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Major characters are neither caricatures nor stereotypes according to Carlson's level of character development. Ideally, they are "individuals with universal problems". (4 pts.)	3
b. Characters are consistent. (3 pts.)	3
c. Language is appropriate for characters. (2 pts.)	2
d. Decision making follows the appropriate stages of moral development. (1 pt.)	1
e. Adequate motivation is provided for characters' decisions and actions. (2 pts.)	2
f. Relationships between characters grow out of characters' personalities. (2 pts.)	1
g. Plot depends upon characterization. Action doesn't happen as if "by magic". (3 pts.)	3
h. Outcome of the novel grows from the characters' decisions and actions. (3 pts.)	3

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Father should be better developed.
Orin and Vic's relationship is good.
Reactions of characters to death is consistent with characterization/personalities.
Plot centers around Mrs. Woodward's death---not over-burdening for a YA novel.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED: 18

CRITERION #3

REALISTIC FICTION PRESENTS A THEME

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Theme is a deeper level of meaning than a character's struggle with a problem. (5 pts.)	5
b. Theme probes values. (4 pts.)	4
c. Theme deals with universal needs. (4 pts.)	4
d. Author uses literary devices to present the theme. (2 pts.)	2
e. Reader is left with something to think about. (5 pts.)	5

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:
Stolz employs symbolism to present theme.
Dealing with death, confronting life and problems,
and search for identity are certainly universal themes.
This particular problem provides much opportunity for
individualizing the human condition.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED: 20

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS FOR REALISM: 50

TOTAL POINTS ASSIGNED THIS BOOK: 48

COMMENTS:

Reader can feel optimistic at the end of this novel.
All characters show positive change.

THE WHYS AND WHEREFORES OF LITTABELLE LEE

Littabelle Lee is tough. As an infant she survived the wild flooding river that killed her parents. She has lived with her grandparents in a rural Ozark hollow ever since. She has tramped all over the region helping her Aunt Sorrow doctor the local folk. Tough, rough Littabelle's life is complicated when the house in which Littabelle, Paw Paw and Maw Maw live burns down, and Sorrow moves away to live with the Hermit. The grandparents are stubborn and courageous and insist they can live in the barn's loft until they can raise a new house. Littabelle realizes her grandparents are aging and weakening. She accepts the burdens of caring for the old folks when they're sick and taking care of the animals. She becomes a teacher in order to raise an income, and must ride her burro over the mountains everyday to get to school. In a gutsy move which infuriates her grandparents, she sues her aunts and uncles for parent neglect. They were selfishly ignoring Maw Maw and Paw Paw's predicament until Littabelle takes hand of the situation.

In the midst of these responsibilities Littabelle manages to sort through her life to discover her "whys and wherefores" and plan her future.

The analysis of The Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee follows.

1. THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD THAT SEEMS PLAUSIBLE.

Very few readers will be able to actually identify with the Lee's lifestyle. They live in an isolated region of the Ozark mountains where the material and mon-material culture is very much different from that which most urban and rural Americans know. The setting is so important to the story and so well described that the world the Cleavers create seems real.

The Lee family has lived in the mountains for years. Littabelle said there were three reasons her grandparents stayed: they were children of pioneers and pioneers themselves, they had affection for their land, and they knew no other ways (p. 52). They knew no other life because of the mountains. The mountains had isolated them from the rest of the world and from change. There were no roads and it's highly probably that Maw Maw and Paw Paw never rode in a car in all of their lives.

Littabelle realizes what a slow, simple life they lead, and unlike her Uncle Hutchens and Aunts Ora and Estie who left the mountains for the city, she thinks mountain life is a good life. She says of town life, "Town dwellers live faster and so miss too much of what is good." (p. 10).

Mountain life may be slower but it is definitely

tougher. "Our weather will attack you one minute and smile on you the next," says Littabelle (p. 12). The Lees have accepted this weather and the hardships it poses; they prepare themselves for it as best they can, and keep right on living after each catastrophe.

The mountains with their many hardships are an integral part of the story because they have helped to shape the characters.

The material culture is essential to this story because it represents the characters' attitudes toward life. Practically no material culture exists beyond the bare necessities of food, clothing, and shelter, and even those aspects of the culture are of the barest, most minimal quality. They reflect the characters' attitudes toward life because Maw Maw, Paw Paw, and Littabelle do not yearn for more. Only Littabelle is even cognizant of the outside world, but she does not wish to be caught up in its trappings. Society's material culture has turned her aunts and uncle into unnatural selfish beings.

Self-sufficiency and pride are important parts of the non-material culture. The grandparents are concerned about the "Lee-way" of earning what they get and not accepting charity. They feel they have been publicly disgraced when Littabelle takes her relatives to court.

The mountains' effect on other aspects of the non-material culture are obvious. Maw Maw and Paw Paw

have one set of close neighbors, are acquainted with the Hermit and a few others, but otherwise have no friends. They are not able to attend church and even Littabelle makes only an occasional stop at the general store. The feeling of "community" is absent in this novel because the mountains prohibit many people, especially the Lees, from participating in activities associated with a community.

Schools are usually a social center in a rural community, but the people of this area place low priority on education. Littabelle thought that when she started teaching, some of her students' parents might come to meet her. None did.

In creating this setting, the Cleavers have perhaps capitalized on a stereotyped image of the Ozarks. The reader can believe the story happens in the 1950's, 1960's, or even 1980's because of the backward, "hick" image of the Ozarks portrayed in other books and movies. Luckily the Cleavers develop non-stereotyped characters (to be discussed later) and carefully depict the continual effects the region has on the people who live there. The setting contributes to the other realistic qualities of the book such as characterization and theme.

Because the setting is well described and contributes to the wholeness of the book, The Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee earns 10 points for this criterion.

2. THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF THE ACTIONS OF WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS.

The description of the setting may provide the reader with a stereotyped idea of what the characters will be like, but he soon finds that the characters are individuals and face many of the same problems people everywhere face.

Littabelle is aware of the stereotyped image people from outside her region have of the Ozark dwellers. She says Holtie Petifer often disappoints tourists because he "does not have an idiot countenance or a lipful of snuff" (p. 13). The Cleavers' characters are not idiot mountain folk. Each character, each family, is different, and the only common characteristic is their poverty.

The well-meaning but lazy Petifers live near the Lees. Their philosophy toward life is important to the story because it contrasts greatly with what Littabelle comes to believe in. The Petifers believe that they cannot control their futures or change their lives; what will be, will be. Littabelle learns that that is not the way she wishes to live her life.

Littabelle has been helping her Aunt Sorrow, a "yarb" doctor, administer natural cures to the country folk for many years. Sorrow has provided for Maw Maw and Paw Paw for years and has also been almost a mother to

Littabelle. The reader can understand the life Sorrow has lived: always giving. She can finally tolerate that life no longer and goes off to live with the Hermit to pursue her own interests. She speaks with bitterness about Ora, Estie, and Hutchens when she tells Littabelle:

> The world's a bad place...most people in it are bad. They will lie to you and thieve from you. If you be weak enough to let them, they'll pack all their responsibilities off on you and they'll run away to have the good times, and you can work at what they've left till you drop in your tracks and still you've not done much. (p. 25)

Later Sorrow tells Littabelle that it's wrong for a son or daughter to give up life for his parents, which is exactly what Sorrow has done and what Littabelle is doing. Sorrow's situation shows Littabelle what will become of her if she doesn't change. Sorrow is important to the development of Littabelle's character because her situation provides motivation for Littabelle's decisions. Sorrow herself is a very believable character; the reader can understand her motivation for leaving.

Maw Maw and Paw Paw are determined to continue their self-sufficient mountain life without help, despite severe hardships. Their aging conditions and poor health puts them on a level of dependency much like children. Sorrow even tells Littabelle that Maw Maw and Paw Paw are like children. (p.49) When fire destroys their house Sorrow takes control of the situation because Maw Maw and Paw Paw don't know what to do. Later, Littabelle finds Maw

Maw out in the snow, with only one shoe, in a very confused, child-like state. Maw Maw also can't comprehend what Sorrow is doing when she moves out, and doesn't really understand the severity of her and Paw Paw's own situation. The grandparents don't realize the hardships Littabelle endures to provide for them.

Littabelle is like her grandparents in that she has a lot of pride, but she also has a sense of righteousness. Littabelle knows Ora, Estie, and Hutchens are abusing Maw Maw and Paw Paw by visiting them only in order to take away as much food as they can, and also by not helping work for them. Littabelle is not too proud to take action against them. She exhibits behavior according to Kohlberg's Stages 3 and 4, which is appropriate for her age.

At first Littabelle believes the way through life is to "carry a big stick" in order to eliminate people or things that get in her way. As she thinks about Sorrow's situation and realizes she is destined for a similar life she finds qualities within herself which enable her to change.

She first meets one of her "wherefores" when she delivers a baby. When she receives only three dollars for her exhausting and non-satisfying work, she realizes doctoring is not for her.

She becomes a substitute teacher only out of the necessity for money. Her determination is portrayed

when she rides her burro up and down the mountain through snowstorms, to earn her meager salary. She learns two things from her job which are the factors that cause the next action in the plot. First, she realizes that she's enduring unreasonable consequences in order to provide for her grandparents; second, her attitude towards education changes. She realizes there are lots of things she doesn't know but would like to find out. As a teacher, she encounters one of her "whys".

Littabelle learns that determination is an asset if put to work appropriately. She is determined to improve her grandparents' life and realizes she can't spend all of her own life doing it. She is maturing and understanding her own identity at that point, and the Cleavers have provided adequate motivation for her maturation.

Instead of using her "big stick", she follows through secretly on a plan. She also learns who can help her achieve her goals.

Littabelle's next idea grows out of her successful attempt to use the legal channels for assistance. She decides to go see the ex-governor whose life Sorrow had once saved, and demand he repay the favor by sending her (Littabelle) to college. By rereading the first chapter, the reader can determine that Littabelle did indeed follow through with her idea.

The plot grows out of Littabelle's decisions, but

her decisions are conversely motivated by what is happening. Nothing is "dropped into" the story line, which in turn makes it very believable. The only criticism of the book's realistic qualities for this criterion is the characterization of Maw Maw and Paw Paw. They are always thought of collectively, whereas they could be developed much more fully individually.

The book is assigned 17 points for this criterion.

3. REALISTIC FICTION PRESENTS A THEME.

Littabelle's meeting her "whys" and "wherefores" represents her search for identity. There are four major experiences which lead to her maturation.

First, her experience delivering the baby motivates her to think about her future.

Second, her teaching job sparks her interest in knowledge and gives her an idea of what she wants to do with her future.

Third, her successful court case shows her what determination and seeking help when it's needed can achieve.

Fourth, she learns what is important to her. One day she and a young boy see a deer in the woods. He urges her to shoot it, but she just can't. She says,

> I could not have seen the animal's clear, beautiful eyes, yet I saw them. And I thought I saw in them what all of nature should be to human beings---a glimpse of God. (p.119)

She sees warmth, love, and naturalness in those deer eyes. What she really sees is a reflection of herself as a warm human being who will find beauty wherever she goes. She's found her identity.

That search is definitely not unique to Littabelle nor only to mountain people. Littabelle's feelings are universal.

The questions of a person's responsibility for his parents, a universal social problem, is also probed.

Because the novel presents several themes for the reader to ponder, it earns 19 points for this criterion.

The Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee is assigned a total of 46 points according to the Criteria for Realism. The Cleavers have taken unusual characters in an unusual setting and portrayed them realistically. Universal values and problems with which readers can identify are depicted.

The Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee

CRITERIA FOR REALISM - CHECKLIST

CRITERION #1:

THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD WHICH SEEMS PLAUSIBLE.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Time passes at the same rate as it does in the twentieth century. (must meet this criterion)	
b. Story is set in a specific era. (1 pt.)	1
c. Material culture is accurately depicted through any of the following which are appropriate for the story: (4 pts.)	4
---Homes	
---Schools	
---Food	
---Clothing	
---Furniture	
---Transportation	
---Other buildings, businesses	
d. City, town, or other surroundings are described. (1 pt.)	1
e. Non-material culture is stated implied through the narration or characters' action and speech. Components of the non-material culture are: (4 pts.)	4
---Personal values	
---Community or regional social values	
---Religion	
---Philosophical beliefs	
---Traditions	

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Setting becomes integral to story---aids character development because of the problems it creates. Life in the Ozarks is well described.
Material culture (or lack of it) reflects non-material culture. The Cleavers almost use a stereotyped image of the Ozarks. However, the reader feels as if he were really there; the image created becomes very familiar.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 10 POINTS ASSIGNED: 10

The Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee

CRITERION #2:

THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF ACTIONS OF WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Major characters are neither caricatures nor stereotypes according to Carlson's level of character development. Ideally, they are "individuals with universal problems". (4 pts.)	2
b. Characters are consistent. (3 pts.)	3
c. Language is appropriate for characters. (2 pts.)	2
d. Decision making follows the appropriate stages of moral development. (1 pt.)	1
e. Adequate motivation is provided for characters' decisions and actions. (2 pts.)	2
f. Relationships between characters grow out of characters' personalities. (2 pts.)	1
g. Plot depends upon characterization. Action doesn't happen as if "by magic". (3 pts.)	3
h. Outcome of the novel grows from the characters' decisions and actions. (3 pts.)	3

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Maw Maw and Paw Paw are not very well-developed. They remain in the background too much.
Plot depends totally on Littabelle's determination.
Relationship between Littabelle and Sorrow, but relationships between Maw Maw and Littabelle, and Paw Paw and Littabelle are undeveloped.
Outcome is consistent with Littabelle's personality.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED: 17

The Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle

CRITERION #3

REALISTIC FICTION PRESENTS A THEME

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Theme is a deeper level of meaning than a character's struggle with a problem. (5 pts.)	5
b. Theme probes values. (4 pts.)	3
c. Theme deals with universal needs. (4 pts.)	4
d. Author uses literary devices to present the theme. (2 pts.)	2
e. Reader is left with something to think about. (5 pts.)	5

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:
Littabelle is the strongest, most-developed element of the story. The theme grows from her reaction to others, her situation, and her limitations.
Book would make a stronger comment on society if Maw Maw and Paw Paw were developed more. As is, theme deals with finding one's place (responsibilities) in society.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED: 19

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS FOR REALISM: 50

TOTAL POINTS ASSIGNED THIS BOOK: 46

COMMENTS:

Reader can believe Littabelle and her family really exist, mainly because of the setting and Littabelle's character.

GO AND CATCH A FLYING FISH

Jem, Taylor, and B.J. Reddick are growing up in an isolated, beautiful part of Florida where they can swim, sail, fish, and watch wildlife. Unfortunately, they must also listen to their parents argue.

Their father, Tony, is a chef who has specifically chosen this area in which to raise his children. He detests city life.

Their mother, Junie, becomes discontented with her role as housewife and mother. She and Tony argue over the way she spends money. Both are stubborn and uncompromising. She finally leaves her home, husband, and children and goes to New York City to pursue a career.

When their mother leaves, Jem and Taylor must take care of B.J.; a tremendous chore.

The following is an analysis of the novel according to the Criteria for Realism.

1. THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD WHICH SEEMS PLAUSIBLE.

In this novel, Mary Stolz writes about the area where she lives, the southern tip of Florida.

The story is set in the 1970's or even 1980's. Sandy, Taylor's friend, calls her sister's boyfriend Alexander a "living artifact of the sixties" (p. 185).

However, the problem and theme of the novel could transpire anytime.

Stolz describes the trees, water, birds, and animals of the region in depicting the setting and relates them to the character and plot. Taylor's pastime of bird-watching will be described later, but as part of the setting, Stolz's meticulous descriptions of the birds and the way she involved them in the story contribute to the realism. Her descriptions of the fish also help give the reader a feeling for the setting.

Tony Reddick chose to live in this region so his children could grow up next to nature, away from the fears of the city. The whole family really enjoys the area where they live. They live in a very rustic house with worn out furniture which is Junie's trademark. The children are not at all ashamed of their belongings, even when visiting at the Howard's home.

The Howards live in a huge, expensive house, complete with manicured gardens, swimming pool, and maids. It's interesting that the Howard children and the Reddick children are such good friends, considering their backgrounds. Material culture obviously does not specifically reflect, nor determine, the non-material culture for the kids.

The major problem of the novel, the relationship between Junie and Tony, is depicted through their

squabbling over items of the material culture. In their case, material culture does reflect non-material culture. Junie likes antiques and considers them important to her life, whereas Tony considers them frivolous. The material culture symbolizes the differences between Junie and Tony.

Stolz writes a great deal about food in this novel. Tony is a chef, and both Jem and Taylor love to cook gourmet food. In this novel, food is another symbol of the non-material culture, but also sort of a "trademark" Stolz places on the family to make them different. In Edge of Next Year she used a similar technique. Mr. Woodward was a writer and the whole family enjoyed creating unusual phrases with words. Here, the father is a chef and the family enjoys creating with food. Their preoccupation with food makes them different from other families.

Go and Catch a Flying Fish is assigned 10 points for this criterion because Stolz uses many details to describe enough aspects of the setting to make it seem plausible, and because the characters' interactions with the environment are important to the story.

2. THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF THE ACTIONS OF WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS.

Stolz develops four major characters (Taylor, Tony, Jem, and June) and several minor ones.

Jem is ten years old and loves fish. He has an

aquarium for which he catches fish, but he regularly returns them to the ocean and collects new ones. His preoccupation with fish shelters him from his parents' constant fighting. He is confused about his parents because he's seen their fighting sessions for years now and thinks they play a game with each other. Even he can't tell when they are being real and when they're pretending.

Tony and Junie are both somewhat "free spirits" but Tony is content with his isolated home while Junie wants more. Tony is much more a practical person than Junie. He set his goals in life early and has also reached them.

Junie's character is symbolized by fish in two episodes of the novel. The first line reads, "At being what they are without pretension, fish are flawless..." (1). In the last chapter, B.J. urges Jem to catch a flying fish. Jem replies, "If I did catch one, it wouldn't be beautiful anymore. It'd only be ugly. They're only beautiful out there, racing over the waves," (p. 213). That's exactly the way Junie is. Mrs. Howard refers to Junie as "your beautiful mother" and people on the beach whistle at her often. Running freely she is beautiful, but when she has to cope with her family, she becomes caged and ugly. Both she and Tony are unaccommodating toward each other's feelings, and as they get caught up in their own problems they ignore their children.

Stolz provides enough insight into Tony's and Junie's personalities for them to seem real. Junie's escape certainly grows from her relationship with Tony.

Thirteen-year-old Taylor protects herself from the ugliness of her homelife by becoming obsessed with bird-watching. To her, birds are beautiful creatures who always know exactly who they are and what they have to do (p. 19). Birds are everything the humans in her life aren't. She, like Jem, can't figure out what is going on between her parents and feels disregarded by them (p. 52).

Jem and Taylor take care of their younger brother, B.J., after their mother leaves. It is a stressful situation for them because B.J., at age four, throws tantrums and is very demanding. They both exhibit great patience and understanding, but at the same time realize they can't carry on much longer. That situation is very realistic.

Jem and Taylor both display behavior from Kohlberg's Stages 3 and 4. They want to be obedient because they realize it's important to maintaining family life. B.J. fluctuates between Stages 1 and 2. He is still very young, and doesn't always understand why he must do certain things. These characterizations are at the appropriate age levels according to Kohlberg's theory.

Stolz develops these unique characters, provides adequate motivation for their actions, and then develops

plot from the growing and changing characters. Yet the relationships between the characters remains somewhat flat. The reader learns more about the relationship between Dan and Mr. Howard, two minor characters, than he does about Jem and Tony or Taylor and Tony. Taylor repeats she knows that her parents love their kids, but there is no proof of that in the book. Jem and Taylor are separate individuals, as are Junie and Tony, yet Junie interacts with Jem exactly as she does with Taylor. Tony's interactions with Jem appear the same as with Taylor. This fault is the only shortcoming in the characterization of the novel.

Stolz does create unique, well-developed characters and does not use stereotypes. She provides adequate, realistic motivation for their actions. Therefore, Go and Catch a Flying Fish is assigned 16 points for Criterion #2.

3. REALISTIC FICTION PRESENTS A THEME.

The first line of the book, "At being what they are without pretension, fish are flawless", and Jem's line from the last chapter, "If I did catch one, it wouldn't be beautiful anymore," together portray one theme of the novel. Everyone has problems even though he or she may look perfect or flawless from a distance. As Taylor learns, each person deals with his problems differently.

In the last chapter, Taylor and Jem make a castle and build a wall around it to protect it, but they could keep it safe only until the tide comes in. This symbolizes

another theme for the novel. Tony could not keep his family permanently isolated from the real world, nor could Mr. Howard, despite his huge house, pool, and hedges. Taylor could not avoid going to high school on the mainland. This second theme deals with the concept that it's impossible to totally isolate or protect oneself or family from external forces. Everyone is vulnerable to society's pressures, and everyone reacts to these pressures differently.

The two themes suggested for Go and Catch a Flying Fish encompass universal values and feelings found in the "real" world, which almost every reader will at some time in his life encounter. The novel is assigned 20 points for this criterion.

Stolz takes a very realistic problem and examines individuals' reactions to it in this novel, yet the implications are far reaching. Persons who have never been in such a situation will be able to identify with the characters in the story, because their feelings and reactions are so realistic. The total number of points assigned Go and Catch a Flying Fish is 46, making it an extremely realistic book.

Go and Catch a Flying Fish

CRITERIA FOR REALISM - CHECKLIST

CRITERION #1:

THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD WHICH SEEMS PLAUSIBLE.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Time passes at the same rate as it does in the twentieth century. (must meet this criterion)	
b. Story is set in a specific era. (1 pt.)	1
c. Material culture is accurately depicted through any of the following which are appropriate for the story: (4 pts.) ---Homes ---Schools ---Food ---Clothing ---Furniture ---Transportation ---Other buildings, businesses	4
d. City, town, or other surroundings are described. (1 pt.)	1
e. Non-material culture is stated implied through the narration or characters' action and speech. Components of the non-material culture are: (4 pts.) ---Personal values ---Community or regional social values ---Religion ---Philosophical beliefs ---Traditions	4

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Setting is extremely well-developed.
It sounds like paradise! A few lucky kids really do grow up in a place like that.
Material and non-material culture are certainly important in this novel.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 10 POINTS ASSIGNED: 10

Go and Catch a Flying Fish

CRITERION #2:

THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF ACTIONS OF WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Major characters are neither caricatures nor stereotypes according to Carlson's level of character development. Ideally, they are "individuals with universal problems". (4 pts.)	3
b. Characters are consistent. (3 pts.)	3
c. Language is appropriate for characters. (2 pts.)	1
d. Decision making follows the appropriate stages of moral development. (1 pt.)	1
e. Adequate motivation is provided for characters' decisions and actions. (2 pts.)	2
f. Relationships between characters grow out of characters' personalities. (2 pts.)	0
g. Plot depends upon characterization. Action doesn't happen as if "by magic". (3 pts.)	3
h. Outcome of the novel grows from the characters' decisions and actions. (3 pts.)	3

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Even in paradise, people have problems. Reader can see why Junie and Tony don't get along, and can understand Jem and Taylor's predicament. Why didn't Junie leave years earlier? Unfortunately, relationships between the kids and their parents are not well done. B.J. is at times confusing---he talks too sophisticated at times, and occasionally he thinks in a manner that would be too complex for a child his age.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED:____

Go and Catch a Flying Fish

CRITERION #3

REALISTIC FICTION PRESENTS A THEME

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Theme is a deeper level of meaning than a character's struggle with a problem. (5 pts.)	5
b. Theme probes values. (4 pts.)	4
c. Theme deals with universal needs. (4 pts.)	4
d. Author uses literary devices to present the theme. (2 pts.)	2
e. Reader is left with something to think about. (5 pts.)	5

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Stolz uses symbolism/metaphors to represent themes.
Themes are universal: protecting one's "possessions" from the outside world.
Probes identity, responsibility, family loyalty.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED: 20

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS FOR REALISM: 50

TOTAL POINTS ASSIGNED THIS BOOK: 46

COMMENTS:

Jem's and Taylor's problems with B.J. seemed very realistic, as did their father's on/off attention to his parenting duties. His preoccupation with his problems was realistic.

THE MASQUERADE

Edward Walker is led off to jail and charged with embezzling millions of dollars from his law clients, but it is his family who bears the pain of the situation.

The upper class folk of Old Greenwich gape at the Walkers, pity them, and shun them. The Walkers must sell their mansion, auction off all their personal possessions and move to a small dingy apartment over a neighborhood drugstore. Shy, incompetent Mrs. Walker even takes a job at the drugstore, an unspeakable act in Old Greenwich society.

Eighteen year old Rebecca Walker believes her father to be innocent and is infuriated when her sister Sarah refuses to visit Edward in prison and when her brother Eric makes wise-cracks about their father's guilt. Rebecca is calm and collected and holds the family together. Her mother, Alicia, suffers a mental breakdown and must be placed in a mental hospital. Sarah runs off to New York to pursue a dancing career but returns home totally disenchanted, and hypochondriac Eric antagonizes the entire family with his symptoms and sicknesses. Rebecca must provide support and comfort for little Eliza, pay the bills, take a part-time job, tolerate Eric, and believe in her father.

When Edward Walker is found guilty, Rebecca's strong

character finally breaks. Her hero destroyed, she now finds it difficult to keep her life together and to build a future for herself.

The Criteria for Realism can be used to analyze The Masquerade.

1. THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD WHICH SEEMS PLAUSIBLE.

In The Masquerade, Susan Shreve actually creates two worlds. Juxtaposed to the elite upper crust of Old Greenwich society to which the Walkers previously belonged is the Walker's new world---one that is dingy and depressing. Both worlds are realistic.

The story is set specifically in the 1970's as noted by the references to the years the children were born and other events in the Walkers' lives.

The Walkers' materialistic high-society culture is accurately described by Shreve in the beginning of the book, and then destroyed, as the Walkers sell their possessions, just as the Walkers' lives are destroyed.

Their new life is very much different. The apartment they move into is tiny, dreary, and dingy. As they live in this cramped apartment their personalities also are cramped. Here the material culture drastically affects the non-material culture and both are extremely important aspects of the story.

The change in the characters' beliefs, attitudes, and values is believable and well-expressed. Living above a

corner drug store was incomprehensible to the Walkers in the beginning and humiliating when it actually happened. The material culture, portrayed by the Walker's apartment and personal belongings, conflicts with the non-material culture, the Walker's original beliefs and attitudes, because of the description and importance of the two juxtaposed worlds. The Masquerade earns ten points for this criterion.

2. THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF THE ACTIONS OF WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS.

Shreve handles a large number of major characters and all are well-developed and consistent. None are stereotypes.

Alicia (Mrs. Walker), Eric, Sarah, and Rebecca are the ones most affected by the predicament. Shreve provides enough information about the background of each character for the reader to understand why each reacts as he does. Alicia Walker's mental breakdown is not surprising to the reader because he knows of her sheltered childhood, her shyness, and self-consciousness, her dependence on material objects for self-confidence. Sarah's complete rejection of her father is understandable because he had, on several occasions, rejected her and favored Rebecca.

The story's protagonist is Rebecca. She has always idolized her father and cannot believe him guilty of embezzlement. To her he has always been strong and

infallible. Rebecca tries to be as strong and infallible as she believes him to have been, when she takes on the responsibilities of managing the family. Her brother and sisters instantly expect her to take care of their sick mother, to locate Sarah when she runs off, and to take over her mother's part time job. Rebecca puts aside her social life and her future plans to accept these responsibilities.

When her father admits his guilt, Rebecca also cracks. Her hero has been destroyed. She must accept not only that her father lied, but that he lied to her. For the first time in her life, she sees her father as a "less-than-perfect" being.

The change in Rebecca is realistic. For the first time she is her own person, not a puppet of her father's wishes. She accordingly does everything her father would have detested.

In her search for a new identity she falls into a lower-class, rough crowd. She makes many mistakes she had previously not allowed herself. Her evolving character is very believable and realistic.

Initially, Rebecca makes decisions according to Kohlberg's Stage 3 and 4 but grows into Stage 5 thinking during her time of crisis, which is appropriate for her age.

Sarah's character also undergoes a change. She attempts to shield herself from humiliation through her

dancing but cracks as Rebecca does. She is able to reconstruct her life more easily when her father admits his guilt because she has believed him guilty all along. His confession removes much stress from Sarah's situation because she no longer lives in limbo. She can get on with her life. In this way, the book is optimistic.

Each character is an individual dealing with his problems in his own unique manner. The relationships between most characters are carefully constructed. Because of those two qualities, The Masquerade earns 19 points for this criterion.

3. REALISTIC FICTION MUST DEAL WITH A THEME.

Although the exact outcomes of the Walker's problems are not stated, each character has undergone a change which has led him or her to a better understanding of self and identity. Rebecca's change, because she is the protagonist, is the most obvious. Through these changes the novel presents an optimistic view of life.

The Masquerade deals with accepting one's parents as real people, but the major theme is "overcoming obstacles to find one's true self identity." This novel requires much effort on the reader's part. If the reader is going to have something to think about after he finishes the book, he must be thinking, especially about Rebecca's behavior, as he reads. Otherwise he may not grasp the theme. The novel is assigned 18 out of 20 points for this criterion.

Overall, the novel has a setting which contributes much to the situation. The characterization is superb. The Masquerade deals with a serious topic but is at times humorous and always honest. Its total number of points is 47.

The Masquerade

CRITERIA FOR REALISM - CHECKLIST

CRITERION #1:

THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD WHICH SEEMS PLAUSIBLE.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Time passes at the same rate as it does in the twentieth century. (must meet this criterion)	
b. Story is set in a specific era. (1 pt.)	1
c. Material culture is accurately depicted through any of the following which are appropriate for the story: (4 pts.)	4
---Homes ---Schools ---Food ---Clothing ---Furniture ---Transportation ---Other buildings, businesses	
d. City, town, or other surroundings are described. (1 pt.)	1
e. Non-material culture is stated implied through the narration or characters' action and speech. Components of the non-material culture are: (4 pts.) ---Personal values ---Community or regional social values ---Religion ---Philosophical beliefs ---Traditions	4

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Setting aids character development, helps provide motivation.

Setting presents limitations for characters. The upper class society provides an excellent backdrop, but these problems could happen to any family.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 10 POINTS ASSIGNED: 10

The Masquerade

CRITERION #2:

THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF ACTIONS OF WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Major characters are neither caricatures nor stereotypes according to Carlson's level of character development. Ideally, they are "individuals with universal problems". (4 pts.)	4
b. Characters are consistent. (3 pts.)	3
c. Language is appropriate for characters. (2 pts.)	2
d. Decision making follows the appropriate stages of moral development. (1 pt.)	1
e. Adequate motivation is provided for characters' decisions and actions. (2 pts.)	2
f. Relationships between characters grow out of characters' personalities. (2 pts.)	2
g. Plot depends upon characterization. Action doesn't happen as if "by magic". (3 pts.)	3
h. Outcome of the novel grows from the characters' decisions and actions. (3 pts.)	3

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Characters each react differently to the family crisis.
Reactions consistent with personalities.
Plot depends on reactions.
Outcome is good; still unresolved, yet optimistic.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED: 20

The Masquerade

CRITERION #3

REALISTIC FICTION PRESENTS A THEME

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Theme is a deeper level of meaning than a character's struggle with a problem. (5 pts.)	5
b. Theme probes values. (4 pts.)	4
c. Theme deals with universal needs. (4 pts.)	4
d. Author uses literary devices to present the theme. (2 pts.)	1
e. Reader is left with something to think about. (5 pts.)	4

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Shows conflict between an individual's concept of right/wrong and society's.
Delves into trust, etc.
Probes concept of family and family loyalty.
Reader may not fully understand the roles of characters which contribute to theme, especially a younger reader who is not "thinking" heavily about what he is reading.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED: 18

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS FOR REALISM: 50

TOTAL POINTS ASSIGNED THIS BOOK: 47

COMMENTS:

TEX

Texas McCormick and his older brother Mason live on a tiny ranch alone because their father is a cowboy on the rodeo circuit and he takes off for several months each year. Seventeen-year-old Mace attempts to handle the finances, the household, and Tex, while their father is gone.

Because they are becoming dangerously poor, Mason has to sell his and Tex's horses. Tex loves his horse (it's his closest companion) and he does not comprehend how serious their financial situation is. He and Mason get in a fight and Mason beats up Tex pretty badly. Tex is comforted by the neighbors, John and Jamie Collins.

The poor McCormick kids and the rich Collins kids have always been good friends despite Cole Collins's attempts to keep his six kids away from the poor McCormicks.

Tex learns that life goes on without his horse even though it's empty and depressing. He has a knack for getting in trouble, whether he's at the fair, in school, or at a shopping mall. Mace comes to his rescue often and prevents him from getting punished.

Johnny Collins and Tex are best friends but they get in an argument and don't speak to each other for quite some time. Their friendship survives when Tex comes to Johnny's assistance. Johnny takes a dare and attempts to jump his

cycle over a dangerous creek. He fails, but Tex takes the cycle and successfully completes the jump. He has reaffirmed his friendship with Johnny.

On a trip to the city, Tex and Mace visit Lem, a friend who had to get married and who now lives in the city with his wife and baby. Tex is awed by Lem's flashy lifestyle, but Mason quickly realizes Lem is financing his new car and apartment by selling drugs. Mason is disgusted by Lem's actions.

On their return trip, Tex and Mason pick up a hitchhiker. The guy pulls a gun on Mace and orders Tex to drive him to the state line, warning them he's not afraid to kill them. When Tex sees the police approaching behind him, he ditches the truck. The police shoot and kill the hitchhiker, who had escaped from prison. Tex is terribly upset by the incident because for the first time he thinks of his own future. The hitchiker had reminded him of himself.

Because of the hitchhiking incident, Mace and Tex's father returns home. He cannot comprehend the hardships he has placed on his two boys, and his return does not improve their situation. He and Mason clash when they are called to school by the principal because Tex has pulled another prank. Mason becomes irate because his father doesn't take Tex seriously. He spews out the truth about the family: Mr. McCormick is not Tex's real father.

Upon learning the truth about his father, Tex runs

away from the school and is picked up by Lem. He goes with Lem to make a drug delivery and gets in the middle of a fracas. He is shot. He is forced to think about himself, his family, and his future.

The novel portrays an individual's search for identity and can be analyzed according to the Criteria for Realism.

1. THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD WHICH SEEMS PLAUSIBLE.

S.E. Hinton creates a rural, small town setting which is described very little and serves mainly as a backdrop for the story.

The small town is not described, although for Mace and Tex's trip to the city Hinton uses accurate details to describe the shopping mall and the traffic.

The school seems believable although very little is actually stated. It, like the town, seems like a very ordinary and common place.

A few details of the material culture are important to the story. The McCormicks have a tiny house with shabby furniture and a beat-up truck. Mason is bothered about this, especially because the Collins next door have a big, nice house, with nice furniture.

The Collins kids always have money to spend, but Mace has to sell the McCormick's horses, just so he and Tex can eat. Despite these vast differences, the Collins kids and the McCormicks are good friends.

One aspect of the setting is significant to the

story. Hinton describes Mace and Tex's visit to Lem's apartment. They wind through a maze of apartment complexes until they finally find his. The apartment is messy because of all the baby paraphernalia. Tex comments that Lem seems really clumsy there, whereas he hadn't ever seemed clumsy when he was riding horses back home. Lem does not belong in the city. It traps him, just as his marriage does. The reader can quickly recognize how wrong Lem's life is for him and predict his future problems.

Religion and traditions are non-existent, which indicates that the concept of family is also lacking. Tex and Mace have not had any moral guidance from their father. They have been on their own to fend for themselves, and it is realistic that two teenage boys would not be concerned much with going to church.

The setting of Tex does not contribute a great deal to the story, but the description that is presented does seem realistic. Tex is assigned 8 points for this criterion.

2. THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF THE ACTIONS OF WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS.

Hinton presents many major characters in this novel, none of which are stereotypes of caricatures. She carefully develops the unique personality of each and the relationships between them, making characterization one of the most realistic qualities of the book.

Jamie Collins is a very perceptive seventh grade girl. She assessed Lem's marriage and baby quickly and offers her opinion (p. 55). She is a quick thinker, as displayed at the shopping mall when she rescues Tex from being embarassed in front of her friends. She is "going" as compared to "staying" in life, and she knows it. She's set goals for herself although she doesn't really know exactly what those goals are yet. When Tex suggests they get married in two years, she knows it wouldn't work (p. 141). She tells Tex she knows she would consider it, because of the temporary security and shelter from change it would provide, but she knows herself well enough to recognize she would not be content in the situation.

Johnny Collins and Tex will probably be friends for life. There is a bond between them despite their different backgrounds. Johnny and Tex are both changing, they realize it, and for a while they do not speak to each other. They are growing apart because Johnny is interested in his cycle and Tex is interested in Jamie. But Tex comes to Johnny's aid in a moment of need. Their friendship may change as they mature, but it will not die.

Mason has tried to be a father to Tex during their dad's absence. Mace also tries to be a super student and basketball star. To other kids he appears to be perfect. Mason does a good job of masking his emotions, and when he slips, like when he beats up Tex, he is angry with himself

for being unable to control his feelings.

Tex slowly becomes cognizant of Mace's feelings toward their father, but neither Tex nor the reader realize the motivation for those feelings. Tex assumes Mace hates their father because he abandons them each year, piling his own responsibilities onto Mace. At one point Mace tells Tex, "Texas, all my life I wanted somebody who knew more than I did to tell me the truth. I really wanted that. I never got it. I had to learn it all the hard way. I'm just giving you a present I always wanted." (p.94) Mace means he has figured out the truth about human nature, the future, and their father. He resents the injustice with which their father treats them. Late in the book, Tex and the reader realize why Mace really hates his father. His father knew what Tex was not his own flesh and blood and could therefore never accept Tex. Mace also knew about Tex and hates his father for not treating Tex like a son. Mace cannot forgive his father because he knows his father will never change.

Mace's characterization is completed by the description of his reaction to Lem's baby and by his reasoning for breaking up with his girlfriend. In both situations, he talks about being "tied-down." He has been tied to Tex and his father has been trapped in a situation like Lem's for many years. Mace wants to be free to live his own life.

Mace views Cole Collins as a strong father and tries to be like him. Cole is the only real father role-model Mason has ever known. Because he thinks highly of Cole, he tries to get Cole's respect. He succeeds.

Fifteen-year-old Tex matures a great deal in the novel and his decision making, or lack of it, presents the basis for the plot.

Initially, Tex is concerned only with his own wishes and needs. He takes no responsibility for his own welfare. He contributes little to his and Mace's survival. Mace cooks, pays bills, and goes to school to bail Tex out of trouble.

Tex describes the various degrees of dirtiness of his clothes; he does not even accept the responsibility for keeping clean. He gets in a fight with Mace because Mace had to sell his horse so they could eat; Tex didn't try to find another source of income. He was too concerned about his own feelings. At this point Tex behaves at Kohlberg's Stage 1.

Tex does not think about the future for himself or others. When Lem tells them of his new baby, Tex is excited, whereas Jamie and Mason immediately think of the baby's and Lem's futures. Tex does not think of consequences for his behavior, because Mason has always gotten him out of trouble. Tex always thinks he'll have another chance; Stage 1 thinking again. Stage 1 thinking is

usually associated with much younger people, but Tex consistently behaves at that stage; his characterization does seem realistic.

The first time Tex thinks about his future is at the fair when Jamie, Johnny, and he visit a fortune teller. She tells some people they are "going" and some they are "staying". Tex figures out Mace is "going" and he's "staying". He's perfectly content in that realization because he has no personal goals.

The plot then grows on Tex's stumbling around and aimless pranks. What happens to Tex seems very realistic.

The trip to the hospital for Mason's tests is a turning point for Tex because several things happen that day which help him begin to understand himself. First, he is accused of shoplifting and learns others do not view him as he views himself. The store owner does not believe Tex's story, which really shakes Tex up. Second, he realizes he does like Jamie and even could become jealous over her. Feelings for girls are new for him. Third, he is concerned about Mason's health for a very self-centered reason. He realizes how much he depends on Mace and how little control he has over himself.

Fourth, the incident with the hitchhiker jolts Tex into understanding what kind of a person he is and what his future might be. After the accident, he remarks to Mason that the hitchhiker "was really a terible person" (p. 108).

Mace asks Tex if he thinks he'd ever turn out like that, and Tex answers "Well, I don't think so. But then nothing really bad has ever happened to me" (p. 108). He thinks something bad must have happened to the hitchhiker to make him like that. He then realizes that the hitchhiker had reminded him of himself, and then worries about his future again.

From this point to the conclusion, each event shows Tex he is going to have to start accepting responsibility for his own actions. He learns Mason and his father can't always rescue him or make his world the way he wants it. They can't get his horse back. He messes up his relationship with Jamie and no one can repair it. He is about to be expelled from school because of his pranks, and neither Mace nor his father can prevent it.

Tex becomes aware of Stage 2 and 3 behavior, but doesn't automatically mature to that level, which is very realistic. He cannot change his old habits overnight. The novel is optimistic because Tex has learned much about himself, and he has changed. He realizes Mason will go off to college, and he will have to think for himself. The reader can speculate that he will become more responsible for himself in the future.

Because of the superb characterization and the relationships between characters, Tex is assigned twenty points for this Criterion.

3. REALISTIC FICTION PRESENTS A THEME.

Tex presents several themes for the reader to think about. It is an exciting story, and when the reader finishes, he is apt to feel bewildered.

First, he would probably think about characterization. The reader might ask himself: will Mace, Tex and their father ever be a real family? The answer is no. There have been too many long absences, too many "unforgiveables". Mace has always known, and now Tex knows, that their father will not change. Tex has learned that Mace and his father will not be able to get him out of trouble or patch up the messes he gets himself into. At the beginning of the story he thought Mace could always protect him. He thought his dad would get his horse back. The turning point in the novel where Tex begins to learn that he's responsible for himself, is the day he picks up the hitchhiker.

Second, the reader may question, will Tex keep out of trouble? Again, the answer is no. He enjoys pranks; they are an expression of his personality. As a result of everything that has happened to him, he is better prepared to become responsible for himself. His search for identity is the major theme of the book.

Tex is assigned the overall numerical rating of 46 points, which places it in the "Extremely Realistic" category.

Tex

CRITERIA FOR REALISM - CHECKLIST

CRITERION #1:

THE AUTHOR CREATES A WORLD WHICH SEEMS PLAUSIBLE.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Time passes at the same rate as it does in the twentieth century. (must meet this criterion)	
b. Story is set in a specific era. (1 pt.)	1
c. Material culture is accurately depicted through any of the following which are appropriate for the story: (4 pts.) ---Homes ---Schools ---Food ---Clothing ---Furniture ---Transportation ---Other buildings, businesses	3
d. City, town, or other surroundings are described. (1 pt.)	0
e. Non-material culture is stated implied through the narration or characters' action and speech. Components of the non-material culture are: (4 pts.) ---Personal values ---Community or regional social values ---Religion ---Philosophical beliefs ---Traditions	4

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Setting is only a backdrop.
Not used symbolically.
Doesn't aid character development or plot.
Not well-described.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 10 POINTS ASSIGNED: 8

Tex

CRITERION #2:

THE PLOT GROWS OUT OF ACTIONS OF WELL-DEVELOPED CHARACTERS.

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Major characters are neither caricatures nor stereotypes according to Carlson's level of character development. Ideally, they are "individuals with universal problems". (4 pts.)	4
b. Characters are consistent. (3 pts.)	3
c. Language is appropriate for characters. (2 pts.)	2
d. Decision making follows the appropriate stages of moral development. (1 pt.)	1
e. Adequate motivation is provided for characters' decisions and actions. (2 pts.)	2
f. Relationships between characters grow out of characters' personalities. (2 pts.)	2
g. Plot depends upon characterization. Action doesn't happen as if "by magic". (3 pts.)	3
h. Outcome of the novel grows from the characters' decisions and actions. (3 pts.)	3

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Hinton develops many characters. None are stereotypes.
Each has distinct personality.
Relationships are done extremely well.
Plot depends on Tex's aimless life.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED: 20

CRITERION #3

REALISTIC FICTION PRESENTS A THEME

Specific Components:	Points Assigned:
a. Theme is a deeper level of meaning than a character's struggle with a problem. (5 pts.)	5
b. Theme probes values. (4 pts.)	4
c. Theme deals with universal needs. (4 pts.)	4
d. Author uses literary devices to present the theme. (2 pts.)	0
e. Reader is left with something to think about. (5 pts.)	5

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Hinton's writing style is all "up front". She uses no literary symbolism, allegories, or personification. Still presents several themes.
Tex's need for authority, for companionship, his immaturity and growth, and his search for identity are thought-provoking.
Tex shows people masking their true feelings.
Optimistic at conclusion.

POSSIBLE POINTS: 20 POINTS ASSIGNED: 18

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS FOR REALISM: 50

TOTAL POINTS ASSIGNED THIS BOOK: 46

COMMENTS:

SUMMARY

According to the criteria developed in this paper, and in this evaluator's opinion, the six novels analyzed represent the most realistic of books in which young adults accept parenting roles.

In all six of the novels, the authors create plausible worlds for the settings. But in five of the novels, the setting is more than a backdrop for the story or a reference point to orient the reader. The setting is used to aid characterization and develop theme.

Stolz effectively uses the angry storm in Go and Catch a Flying Fish to show that even the most pristine, peaceful setting is not safe from external forces, just as the Reddick family isn't. In Edge of Next Year, Stolz uses material culture to symbolize the characters' beliefs and philosophies, which in turn become part of the theme.

Shreve juxtaposes the Walker's tiny apartment with their previous mansion to show how their lives changed physically and psychologically. Having the characters interact in the new setting is one way Shreve achieves character development, and the characters' growth contributes to the theme of the novel.

Ungebrecht uses her setting to install believability in the plot, but the problems created by that particular

affect Sandy's growth and maturation. Again, setting and characterization combine to help portray theme.

Littabelle finds strength within herself to overcome the limitations that the setting (the mountains) has placed on her family. In The Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee by Vera and Bill Cleaver, the setting forces the protagonist to search for identity; again, setting added to characterization equals theme.

The theme in each of these six novels centers around the characters' motivation and search for self. In each novel a young adult is concerned with taking care of others. Yet these books present more than a "slice of someone's life"; they present a slive of everyone's. The reader can find a bit of himself in each novel, because in each the characters discover meanings and goals for their lives, not just solutions to temporary problems.

As discussed above, the setting in most of these novels is very important to characterization. Characterization in turn leads to the concept of theme. These six novels earn the highest ratings for realism because of the way the setting, characterization, and plot work together to create a universal theme.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Following is an annotated bibliography of the novels in which young adults accept parenting roles which were evaluated according to the Criteria for Realism. After the summary of each book, the total number of points assigned during the evaluation is listed. Novels marked with an asterisk were analyzed in this paper.

Arundel, Honor. Emma's Island. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1968.

Emma enjoys her life with her aunt and uncle on a remote island but when her aunt has a baby, Emma is overburdened with childcare and housekeeping chores. A trip to Europe with her brother and the excitement of an archaeological dig plus romance help relieve her of her burdens. She has to make some weighty decisions about her future.
Numerical indicator of realism: 36.

Bradbury, Bianca. Amethyst Summer. New York: Ives Washburn, Inc., 1968.

Sixteen-year-old Bailey attempts to take on all of her mother's household and family responsibilities while her mother is away for the summer. Bailey finds her brothers and father have high expectations for her and she doesn't have the skills she needs to run a smooth household.
Numerical indicator of realism: 32.

Branscum, Robbie. For the Love of Jody. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1979.

It's the Depression in dusty, dry Arkansas. Frankie works hard on her parents' small farm because her mother is pregnant and unable to do many chores. Frankie also has to take care of her mentally retarded sister, Jody. She begins to feel that no one appreciates her or loves her, despite her hard work.
Numerical indicator of realism: 44.

Bridgers, Sue Ellen. Home Before Dark. New York: Knopf, 1976.

Stella's family finally finds its roots after many years of transient life when James Earl takes his wife, Stella, and the four younger children to his birthplace. Stella loves the shack they live in, her first real home, and vows never to leave it. When her mother dies, Stella must take care of the younger children, and deal with her mixed feelings for two boys.

Numerical indicator of realism: 44 points.

Byars, Betsy. The Night Swimmers. New York: Delacorte, 1980.

Retta, Johnny, and Roy spend much of their time alone because their mother is dead and their father sings in country-western nightclubs. Retta, the oldest, cares for her brothers as best she can, trying to provide food, clothing and entertainment. She finds she has little time for herself and no time for fun.

Numerical indicator of realism: 43 points.

Cleaver, Bill and Vera Cleaver. Me Too. New York: Lippincott, 1973.

When Lydia's father deserts them, her mother removes Lydia's twin sister Lornie from the special school she attends and brings her home. Lornie has attended this special school because she's retarded. Lydia is now left to take care of Lornie, and she's determined to teach her and to make a real person out of her.

Numerical indicator of realism: 44 points.

Cleaver, Bill and Vera Cleaver. Trial Valley. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1977.

The toils and responsibilities of caring for her younger sister and brother begin wearing on Mary Call Luther. The situation becomes more complicated when the Luthers discover an orphan boy down by the river. He also becomes one of Mary Call's responsibilities.

Numerical indicator of realism: 42 points.

Cleaver, Bill and Vera Cleaver. Where the Lilies Bloom. New York: Lippincott, 1969.

Mary Call Luther attempts to conceal her father's death from the neighbors so she and her brothers and sisters won't be separated. They resort to wildcrafting for a source of income, but the hardships of a cold Appalachian winter with little food pose constant threats to their survival.

Numerical indicator of realism: 43 points.

*Cleaver, Bill and Vera Cleaver. The Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee. New York: Atheneum, 1973.
Littabelle Lee's parents died when she was an infant and she has been raised by her Aunt Sorrow and her aging grandparents. Aunt Sorrow moves away, leaving Littabelle to care for the old folks. That is a difficult chore, because their house burns down, there's little money, and almost no food.
Numerical indicator of realism: 46 points.

*Engebrecht, P.A. Under the Haystack. New York: Elsevier-Nelson, 1973.
Sandy takes on the burden of managing a delapitated farm and caring for two younger sisters when her mother and stepfather run off. She fears she must hide her predicament from the neighbors, so that they won't call the authorities. Her situation is complicated by her realization that she needs both a mother and time to grow up, and that she has neither.
Numerical indicator of realism: 50 points.

Hayes, Kent and Alex Lazzarino. Broken Promise. New York: Putnam's Sons, 1978.
Based on composite case histories, Broken Promise relates the story of the five Clawson children who were abandoned by their parents in the midwest. Eleven-year-old Patty is determined to keep her family together, but the children are separated and put into foster homes and state institutions. The children fall victim to the state's bureaucracy until a dedicated cop and a case worker are able to reunite them.
Numerical indicator of realism: 44 points.

*Hinton, S.E. Tex. New York: Delacorte, 1979.
Tex and Mace McCormick's father leaves them alone for several months each year while he follows the rodeo circuit. Mace, seventeen, takes care of the dwindling finances and looks after fourteen-year-old Tex, who has a knack for getting into predicaments. Tex learns the hard way that neither Mason nor his father will be able to get him out of his messes, and that he will have to become more responsible for his actions.
Numerical indicator of realism: 46 points.

Hunt, Irene. William. New York: Scribner, 1977.
Sixteen-year-old, unwed Sarah moves to her distant relative's home to wait out her pregnancy alone, intending to give up her baby for adoption as soon as it is born. She becomes mother not only

to her own child, but also to the orphaned children next door. The younger children work hard at keeping the family together, but the impudent sixteen-year-old, Amy, defies Sarah and almost destroys their lives.
Numerical indicator of realism: 41 points.

Nelson, O.T. The Girl Who Owned A City. Minneapolis: Lerner, 1975.

All adults in the world have died due to a strange plague which did not harm young children. Lisa and her brother Todd attempt to live in their family home but they are attacked by kid gangs. Lisa organizes the neighborhood children to form a system for survival, but they live in constant fear of the gangs. Lisa finally masterminds a plan and leads her children to an old school, her "city", where she hopes they can live safely.
Numerical indicator of realism: 44 points.

Peck, Richard. Don't Look and It Won't Hurt. New York: Holt, 1972.

Carol is a "middle" child. Her mother works nights at a truck stop and her older sister runs around a lot, so Carol is left to take care of her younger sister.

The situation becomes worse when Carol's older sister gets pregnant and is sent away to a home for unwed mothers. Carol is left to deal with her overly-suspicious mother and younger sister.
Numerical indicator of realism: 38 points.

Peck, Richard. Father Figure. New York: Viking, 1978.

When Jim and Byron Atwater's mother ends her cancer-infested life by committing suicide in her car, the boys are sent by their grandmother to spend the summer with their estranged father in Florida.

Jim, seventeen, has not seen his father for nine years, and the reunion is not easy. He has been Byron's "father figure" and now resents his father's presence. He also finds himself attracted to his father's girlfriend. Jim has difficulty understanding why his father abandoned them when Byron was a baby.

By the end of summer, Jim has learned much about himself, his father, his brother, and families.
Numerical indicator of realism: 45 points.

*Shreve, Susan. The Masquerade. New York: Knopf, 1980.

While Edward Walker sits in jail awaiting his trial for embezzlement, his family must sell their home and possessions and move to an apartment over

a drug store. Rebecca attempts to hold the family together during the ordeal.
Numerical indicator of realism: 47 points.

*Stolz, Mary. Edge of Next Year. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.
Orin Woodward, his father, and brother Vic all react differently to Mrs. Woodward's death. Mr. Woodward mourns his wife's death by drinking, while Vic becomes engrossed in raising snakes, salamanders, and other creatures. Orin is left to himself. As his father drinks more and more, Orin accepts responsibility for cooking, cleaning, and caring for Vic.
Numerical indicator of realism: 48 points

*Stolz, Mary. Go and Catch a Flying Fish. New York: Harper and Row, 1979.
Jem and Taylor Reddick spend half of their summer vacation worrying about their parents' arguments. When their mother leaves their rural Florida home for New York City, they must look after their younger brother, B.J.
Numerical indicator of realism: 46 points.

Stolz, Mary. What Time of Night Is It? New York: Harper and Row, 1981.
Thirteen-year-old Taylor and eleven-year-old Jem have been taking care of their younger brother B.J. since their mother walked out on them. Their father, Tony, works at night as a chef and then spends his days sleeping or sailing. Now Tony's mother, Grandmother Reddick, moves in to take care of the children, and Taylor has a difficult time adjusting.
Numerical indicator of realism: 46 points.

Tolan, Stephanie S. The Liberation of Tansy Warner. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1980.
Tansy Warner's mother walks out on her family, disrupting their supposedly happy life. Tansy's dad becomes despondent and refuses to interact with anyone, while Tansy's older sister becomes irritable. Her brother is oblivious to the family's predicament. The tasks of organizing the family and paying the bills fall to Tansy.
Numerical indicator of realism: 44 points.

Wood, Phyllis Anderson. Get A Little Lost, Tia. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978.
Because of his father's death, eighteen-year-old Jason must accept responsibility for his

thirteen-year-old sister, Tia, who is constantly in trouble at home and school. Tia is willing to accept advice only from Celia, Jason's new girlfriend, and Jason resents having to share Celia with Tia.
Numerical indicator of realism: 26 points.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this study was to develop a concrete, objective tool for assessing realism in young adult literature and to use that tool to analyze those novels in which a young adult accepts a parenting role.

Root, Wald, and Donelson provide criteria upon which the Criteria for Realism developed in this study were based.

Three major areas are important when assessing realism. First, the setting must be an accurate reflection of the non-material and material culture. Accurate details must be used so that the total setting seems plausible.

Second, characters must be fully developed to show motivation, feelings, and growth. Stereotypes and caricatures should be avoided. The plot must be the outcome of the characters' actions and decisions. The author should not dwell on gory details or add events solely for shock value because that amounts to sensationalism.

Third, the novel must present a theme. The theme usually deals with an individual's search for a place for himself in society and probes the society's and the individual's values.

These three major points were developed into the

expanded Criteria for Realism. An accompanying Checklist was provided for use in assessing realistic qualities.

Twenty-two novels were identified in which young adults accept parenting roles. These novels were assessed according to the Criteria for Realism, and it was found that the majority of them were realistic. Of the twenty-two novels studies, seven were classified as "Extremely Realistic" and eleven were classified as "Realistic." Only two were found to be "Unrealistic."

The six novels which received the highest numerical ratings according to the criteria were analyzed in depth to provide examples for critics of how to apply the Criteria for Realism.

The specific qualities which made these novels more realistic than the others were the degree of characterization, portrayal of relationships between characters, and thought-provoking themes. All elements of the novels contributed to the universal theme.

Much young adult literature today deals with contemporary problems. It is necessary that such literature depict realistic people dealing with their problems in realistic fashion because young adult readers are searching for role models and possible solutions to their own problems. It is recommended that librarians use an objective tool, such as The Criteria for Realism, when selecting realistic fiction for young adult collections.

This study provides a basis for further research. This writer urges others to study and apply these criteria to other types of problem novels, or perhaps to enlarge upon them for use with other types of young adult literature.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Young Adult Novels Cited

Arrick, Fran. Steffie Can't Come Out to Play. New York: Bradbury, 1978.

Arundel, Honor. Emma's Island. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1968.

Bradbury, Bianca. Amethyst Summer. New York: Ives Washburn, Inc., 1963.

Branscum, Robbie. For the Love of Jody. New York: Lathrop. 1979.

Bridgers, Sue Ellen. Home Before Dark. New York: Knopf, 1976

Butterworth, W.E. Under the Influence. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Four Winds, 1979.

Byars, Betsy. The Night Swimmers. New York, Delacorte, 1980.

Childress, Alice. A Hero Ain't Nothing But A Sandwich. New York: Coward, 1973.

Cleaver, Bill and Vera Cleaver. Me Too. New York: Lippincott, 1977.

Cleaver, Bill and Vera Cleaver. Trial Valley. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1977.

Cleaver, Bill and Vera Cleaver. Where the Lilies Bloom. New York: Lippincott, 1969.

Cleaver, Bill and Vera Cleaver. The Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee. New York: Atheneum, 1973.

Edmonds, Walter D. Two Logs Crossing. New York: Dodd, 1943.

Engebrecht, P.A. Under the Haystack. New York: Elsevier-Nelson, 1973.

Hayes, Kent and Alex Lazzarino. Broken Promise. New York: Putnam's Sons, 1978.

Head, Ann. Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones. New York: Putnam's, 1967.

Hinton, S.E. Tex. New York: Delacorte, 1979.

Hunt, Irene. William. New York: Scribner, 1977.

Johnston, Norma. Keeping Days. New York: Atheneum, 1975.

Lee, Mildred. The Rock and The Willow. New York: Lothrop, 1963.

Major, Kevin. Hold Fast. New York: Delacorte, 1977.

Nelson, O.T. The Girl Who Owned A City. Minneapolis: Lerner, 1975.

Neville, Emily. It's Like This, Cat. New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

O'Dell, Scott. Island of the Blue Dolphins. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1960.

Peck, Richard. Don't Look And It Won't Hurt. New York: Holt, 1972.

Peck, Richard. Father Figure. New York: Viking, 1978.

Peck, Richard. Secrets of the Shopping Mall. New York: Holt, 1972.

Shreve, Susan. The Masquerade. New York: Knopf, 1980.

Stolz, Mary. Edge of Next Year. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

Stolz, Mary. Go And Catch A Flying Fish. New York: Harper and Row, 1979.

Stolz, Mary. What Time Of Night Is It? New York: Harper and Row, 1981.

Tolan, Stephanie S. The Liberation of Tansy Warner. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1980.

Wood, Phyllis Anderson. Get A Little Lost Tia. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978.

Wood, Phyllis Anderson. Song of the Shaggy Canary. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974.

References for Realism

Agee, Hugh. Hackneyed, Acned, Or Just Plain Good: Perceiving Quality in Young Adult Fiction. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 185 549, 1980.

Alm, Richard S. "The Glitter and the Gold." Language Arts, 44 (September, 1955), 315-322.

Arksey, Laura. "Books, Children and Moral Values: A Subliminal Approach." Top of the News, 34 (Summer 1978), 375-387.

Babbitt, Natalie. "Between Innocence and Maturity." Horn Book, 48 (February 1972), 33-7.

Biskin, Donald, and Kenneth Hoskisson. "Moral Development Through Children's Literature." Elementary School Journal, 75 (December 1974), 152-157.

Broderick, Dorothy M. "The Twelve-Year-Old 'Adult' Reader." Library Journal, 90 (May 15, 1965), 17-21.

Cameron, Candance. "Let's Tell It Like It Is . . Changing Values in Children's Literature As Seen in Junior High Fiction." South Dakota Library Bulletin, 55 (April, 1969), 120-3.

Carlsen, G. Robert. Books and the Teenage Reader, 2nd rev. ed. New York: Harper, 1980.

Carlsen, G. Robert. Criteria for Excellence in Adolescent Literature. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document 155 670, 1978.

Carlson, Julie Ann. "A Comparison of the Treatment of the Negro in Children's Literature Between 1929-38 and 1959-1968." PhD dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1969.

Carmichael, Carolyn W. Books to Meet the Needs of Teenagers. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 079 709, 1978.

Cianciolo, Patricia Jean. "Children's Literature Can Affect Coping Behavior." Personnel and Guidance Journal, 42 (May, 1965), 897-903.

Donelson, Kenneth L. "Growing Up Real: YA Literature Comes of Age," Young Adult Literature, ed. M. Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood. (Chicago: ALA, 1980), 22-33.

Donelson, Kenneth. and Alleen Pace Nilsen. Literature for Today's Young Adult. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1980.

Douglass, Joseph H. Children's Books and Contemporary Imperatives: A School of Not So Hard Knocks. U.S. Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 041 707, 1970.

Dreyer, Sharon Spredemann. The Bookfinder: A Guide to Children's Literature About the Needs and Problems of Youth Aged 2-15. Circle Pines, Maine: American Guidance Service, 1977.

Durrell, Ann. "Goodies and Baddies." Wilson Library Bulletin, 44 (December, 1969), 456-457.

Edwards, Margaret A. Fair Garden and the Swarm of Beasts: the Library and the Young Adult. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1974.

Emery, Anne. "In Defense of the Junior Novel." Top of the News, (May, 1961), 22-25.

Engdahl, Sylvia Louise. "Do Teenage Novels Fill a Need?", Young Adult Literature, ed. M. Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood. Chicago: A:A, 1980, 41-48.

Engdahl, Sylvia Louise. "Why Write for Today's Teenagers?", Horn Book, 48 (June, 1972), 249-254.

Fry, Ray M. "Some Recent Trends in Books for Young Adults." Top of the News, (May, 1961), 30-35.

Galen, Nancy and Jerry L. Johns. "Children in Conflict." School Library Journal, 26 (November, 1979), 25-8.

Georgiou, Constantine. "Realism in Children's Literature." Children and Their Literature. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1969, p. 359-411.

Good, Margaret. "Stories About Some Family Problems." The School Librarian, 26 (September, 1978), 218-224.

Haley, Beverly. The Basics of/and Individualizing Adolescent Literature for 150 Kids, More or Less. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 123 628, 1976.

Homze, Alma. Interpersonal Relations in Children's Literature, 1920-1960. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 011 487, 1966.

Hornburger, Jane M. Coping With Change Through Literature. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 105 521, 1975.

Huck, Charlotte. Children's Literature in the Elementary School, 3rd ed. New York: Holt, 1976.

Hutchison, Margaret. "Fifty Years of Young Adult Reading 1921-1971." Top of the News, 30 (November, 1973), 24-52.

Jordan, June. "Young People: Victims of Realism in Books and Life." Wilson Library Bulletin, (October, 1973), 142-145.

Kohlberg, Lawrence. "Stage and Sequence." Handbook of Socialization, ed. by Goslin. New York: Russel Sage, 1967, cited by Peter Scharf. "Moral Development and Literature for Adolescents." Top of the News, (Winter, 1977), p. 133-136.

Krahn, Alice. "Case Against the Junior Novel." Top of the News, (May, 1961), 19-20.

Lang, Helene. Literary Models for Adolescent Behavior. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 076 954, 1973.

Larrick, Nancy. "Divorce, Drugs, Desertion, the Draft: Facing Up to the Realities in Children's Literature." Publishers' Weekly, 201 (February 21, 1972), 90-91.

MacQuown, Vivian J. "The Teen-age Novel: A Critique." School Library Journal, 11 (April 15, 1964), 34-37.

Martinec, Barbara. "Popular, But Not Just Part of the Crowd: Implications of Formula Fiction for Teenagers." English Journal, 60 (March, 1971), 339-344.

Mertz, Maia Pank. "The New Realism: Traditional Cultural Values in Recent Young-Adult Fiction." Phi Delta Kappan, 60 (October, 1978), 101-105.

Monson, Dianne L. and Bette J. Petola, comp. Research In Children's Literature: An Annotated Bibliography. Delaware: International Reading Association, 1976.

Morris, William, ed. The American Heritage Dictionary. Boston: American Heritage and Houghton Mifflin, 1973.

Muller, Al. "Thirty Popular Adolescent Novels." English Journal, (September, 1974), 91-97.

Nordstrom, Ursula. "Honesty in Teenage Novels." Top of the News. (November, 1964), 35-39.

Parker, Virginia. "Some Thoughts on Walls." Language Arts, 54 (January, 1977), 25-28.

Peck, Richard. "In the Country of Teenage Fiction," Young Adult Literature in the Seventies. ed. Jana Varlejs. New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1978.

Perrins, Barbara. "Current Trends in Teenage Literature." Catholic Library World, 43 (November, 1971), 153-159.

Porter, Jane. Reflections of Life Through Books. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 059 843, 1971.

Raymond, Margaret Thomsen. "Bread for Adolescence." Horn Book, 11 (September-October, 1935), 300-302.

Rinsky, Lee. "In Defense of the New Realism for Children and Adolescents." Phi Delta Kappan, (February, 1977), 472-475.

Roberson, Terri. "Judy Blume's Forever, and Other Novels: Are Teachers Ready for Them?" Fiction for Adolescents: Theory and Practice., ed. James E. Davis. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 157 082, 1977.

Root, Shelton J., Jr. "The New Realism---Some Personal Reflections." Language Arts, (January, 1977) 19-24.

Sacco, Margaret. A Bibliography of Books Dealing With The Problems of Older Children. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 114 081, April 1975.

Scharf, Peter. "Moral Development and Literature for Adolescents." Top of the News, (Winter, 1977) 131-136.

Shapiro, Lillian L. "Quality or Popularity?" School Library Journal, 24 (May, 1978), 23-27.

Snyder, Anne. Realistic Fiction for Youth. U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 157 050, 1978.

Staneck, Lou Willett. "Adults and Adolescents, Ambivalence and Ambiguity." School Library Journal, 99 (February 15, 1974), 21-25.

_____"From Gestation to the Pill." School Library Journal, 19 (December, 1972), 34-39.

_____"Real People, Real Books: About YA Readers." Top of the News, 31 (June, 1975), 417.

Stavn, Diane Gersoni. "Watching Fiction for Today's Teens: notes of a critical voyeur." School Library Journal, 94 (November, 1969), 139-140.

Steele, Mary Q. "Realism, Truth, and Honesty." Horn Book, 47 17-27.

Stevenson, Gordon. "On Constructing Useful Realities: in the Uncertain World of the Adolescent." Young Adult Literature. ed. M. Lenz and Ramona M. Mahood. Chicago: ALA, 1980, 107-117.

Townsend, John Rowe. "The Now Child." Horn Book, 49 (June, 1973), 241-247.

Varlejs, Jana. Young Adult Literature in the Seventies: A Selection of Readings. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1978.

Wald, Rhoada. "Realism in Children's Literature." Language Arts, 52 (October, 1975), 939-941.

Weick, Paula M. Adult Portrayal in Novels for Teenage Girls. U.S., Educational Resource Information Center, ERIC Document ED 177 220, 1977.

APPENDIX A

Following are letters received from Betsy Byars, Vera Cleaver, and Mary Stolz. Directly preceding each letter is a copy of the letter sent to the author.

A summary of the telephone conversation with Dr. Sam Sebesta is also included.

829 Madison
Port Townsend, WA
January 5, 1982

Dear Mrs. Byars,

Your books are among the most popular in the school w where I am a librarian. I am glad the kids like them because I too enjoy them very much.

Often I ask kids why they like a certain book, and they reply, "because it's real."

I've been thinking about "real" and "realistic" books for some time now and am writing a paper in which I intend to develop some criteria for evaluating "realism" in young adult books.

What qualities do you consider to be important for realistic novels? What do you do to develop realistic stories?

I would appreciate any ideas or thoughts you could share with me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

A realistic story is not just something that "could happen." It's that, of course, but when an author writes a realistic story, she is asking the reader to believe not just that it could happen, but that it did. And because it is vital that I have this same solid belief, my stories are usually based on something real. THE NIGHT SWIMMERS came about because a friend of mine told me that some kids were slipping into her swimming pool at night. Once I feel that I am on very firm ground, then I am free to make up all sorts of things, but, usually, I make them up out of things I've seen or experienced or read.

Hope this will be some help.

[redacted]

829 Madison
Port Townsend, WA
January 18, 1982

Dear Mrs. Cleaver,

I am a young adult librarian and am interested in novels in which young adults take on parenting roles. I have read and enjoyed The Whys and Wherefores of Littabelle Lee, Where the Lilies Bloom and Me Too.

I'm also interested in "realism" in novels. Currently I'm working on a paper in which I intend to establish criteria for realism.

Your novels seem very real to me. Although I've never visited the Ozarks or Appalachians, the places and people are real.

Could you share your thoughts on how you develop "real" characters for your novels and how you create settings? Also, what qualities do you think are necessary for a realistic novel?

I would appreciate very much any ideas you could share with me. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Bill Cleaver died in 1981. When contacted at Harper and Row, Vera Cleaver's editor said she had just returned from a visit with Mrs. Cleaver. Mrs. Cleaver was terribly upset about her husband's death and was pretty much in seclusion. She was attempting to finish a novel she and Bill had begun.

The editor said Vera Cleaver would probably not reply if she were sent a letter.

The following letter was received in March, 1982. It is a form letter which was obviously written before Mr. Cleaver's death.

Dear Book Friend:

There was a time when I sat here at this machine for hours at a stretch answering each letter that came to us from students and others who read the books we write. I am so sorry that I can no longer do this. You see, each day, each week, the postman brings to our door so many letters that there simply isn't enough time to answer them on a personal basis. Writers of books must write books and so after many years of responding to all of our mail on an individual basis we must come to this other method of doing so.

Along with this message to you there is enclosed a small paper which furnishes a photo of us and the other two members of our household. This paper also gives some information concerning how we became writers, the places in which we have lived, touches on some of the work we have produced and how we work.

Many of our readers ask if the characters we create are real and if the situations we write about ever actually happened. The answer to both of these questions is yes and no. For instance we lived in the western mountains of North Carolina for a period of four years and during that time we came to know many families who made their livings by "wildcrafting" as it is described in WHERE THE LILIES BLOOM. Yet we never actually knew a family exactly like the Luthers as we wrote about them. The same is true with all of the characters and situations we create.

We live now in a little garden town in central Florida. Our yard is a bird and small animal sanctuary. We do not have children of our own but have many young nieces and nephews who come when we are able to steal time from our work for family visits.

Your letters are so welcomed and we would like you to know that they are not discarded. We treasure them as they should be treasured.

Yours faithfully and truly,

[redacted]

Bill Cleaver

[redacted]

Vera Cleaver

829 Madison
Port Townsend, WA
Jan. 18, 1982

Dear Mrs. Stolz,

I am a young adult librarian and am working on a paper for my Master's Degree. For some time I've been interested in the concept of "realism" in young adult literature. In my paper, I'm trying to define realism and develop some criteria by which to judge realism.

I recently read a comment that, "The highest praise for a book is to be called 'real' by a youngster. I've heard young people call your books real.

I'd be grateful if you could share your thoughts about "realism " with me. Do you attempt to write "realistic" books? What do you consider to be the qualities that make a book realistic?

If you do not feel like writing, maybe we could set up a time when I could call you.

Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

P.O.Box 82
Longboat Key,Fl 33548

Dear Ms. Chinn:

It's not so much that I'm ~~xxxxhx~~ busy, though I am, as that I'm indolent, and the thought of writing my ideas abt the qualities & criteria for ~~xxxxx~~ realistic fiction for the young of our time is daunting. In a week or 2 or 3, Harper will send me a new biography with, I understand, some personal details abt how I write & a list of & description of my books. I'll send you a copy of that. Enclosed is an article I wrote a hundred years ago for the Saturday Review. Glancing through it, I find my ideas haven't altered much. Could you send it back as it seems to be the only copy I have? I've written articles for The Writer, The Conn. Journal of English & the NYTimes, but neither have them nor do I recall the dates. Would they be in the Reader's Guide? Also, I understand there is something abt me in the Wilson Library Guide. I've never seen it. And also, in 1974 Citation Press put out a volume by Lee Bennet Hopkins, ~~xxx~~ entitled More Books by More People in which he included an interview with me. That was long ago, too, when we still lived in Connecticut which I miss very much. Still, I've astonished myself by coming to like living in Florida. We are right on the Gulf of Mexico, with nothing between us and the ocean but sea oats and sea gulls. Bird watching down here is fascinatingly different from bird watching in New England. Mostly because the birds stay still and let you look at them. And they're so large with the kind of slow dignity that large creatures have. Not that I don't still love chickadees and thrushes and buntings, but they do tend to dart.
I'll give you my telephone number (813 383 5123) but it does seem a long way to call. If you'd like to, anytime before ten in the evening is fine. Later than that tends to scare me, as I always think something's happened to somebody that I'm nOt going to want to hear about.

Yours,

[redacted]

P.S. How ungracious of me not to say that I think your choice of thesis is wonderful and important. I get quite heartsick thinking how much the children of this generation miss by reading so little and looking at TV so much. I wonder if it's a reversible pondition?

An Honorable Profession

By MARY STOLZ

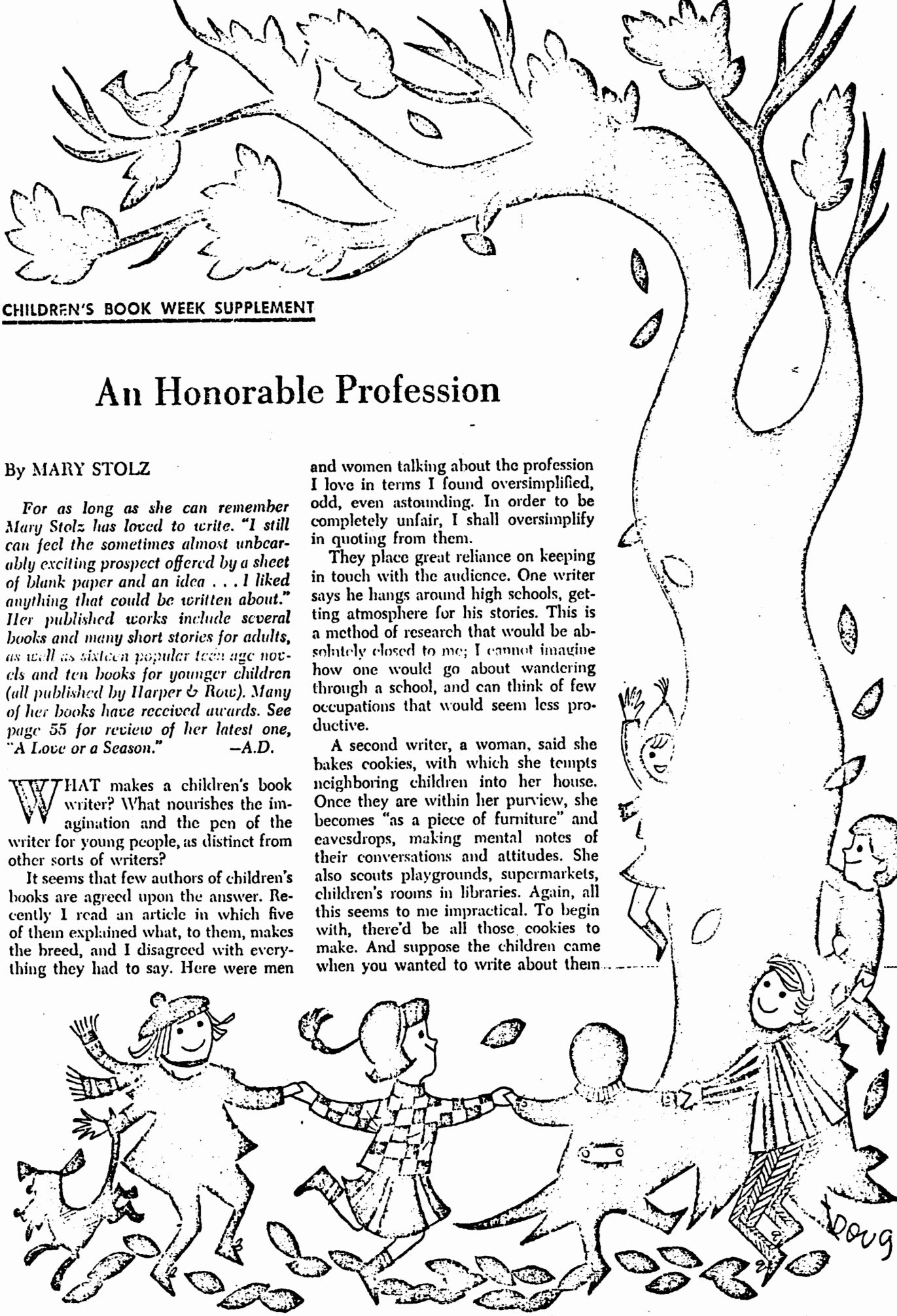
For as long as she can remember Mary Stolz has loved to write. "I still can feel the sometimes almost unbearably exciting prospect offered by a sheet of blank paper and an idea . . . I liked anything that could be written about." Her published works include several books and many short stories for adults, as well as sixteen popular teen age novels and ten books for younger children (all published by Harper & Row). Many of her books have received awards. See page 55 for review of her latest one, "A Love or a Season." —A.D.

WHAT makes a children's book writer? What nourishes the imagination and the pen of the writer for young people, as distinct from other sorts of writers?

It seems that few authors of children's books are agreed upon the answer. Recently I read an article in which five of them explained what, to them, makes the breed, and I disagreed with everything they had to say. Here were men and women talking about the profession I love in terms I found oversimplified, odd, even astounding. In order to be completely unfair, I shall oversimplify in quoting from them.

They place great reliance on keeping in touch with the audience. One writer says he hangs around high schools, getting atmosphere for his stories. This is a method of research that would be absolutely closed to me; I cannot imagine how one would go about wandering through a school, and can think of few occupations that would seem less productive.

A second writer, a woman, said she bakes cookies, with which she tempts neighboring children into her house. Once they are within her purview, she becomes "as a piece of furniture" and eavesdrops, making mental notes of their conversations and attitudes. She also scouts playgrounds, supermarkets, children's rooms in libraries. Again, all this seems to me impractical. To begin with, there'd be all those cookies to make. And suppose the children came when you wanted to write about them



Forgo what may be a good writing mood, or be abrupt with the young visitors and so risk the loss of source material? And how does a normally busy person find time to dawdle in playground, library, and market waiting for children to say or do something usable in the literary sense? I think all this would lead one into the sort of dilemma that thwarts creativity.

Still another woman offered the notion that since children are going to be the readers, children should be editors and arbiters of books in progress. She gives her manuscripts to her own children for editing and comment; strikes from the day's work anything they fail to respond to, and generally attempts to steer her course according to their lights.

I can't begin to think what a hodgepodge this must make of her approach to theme and structure, to say nothing of her self-confidence. My own belief is that no manuscript should be seen by anyone until completion. At that time an editor (a grown-up professional editor in a publishing house is what I have in mind) can be and usually is of real value in assisting a writer to stand away a bit and refocus. The best writer, even one with 20-20 vision, tends to get myopic in the presence of his own product, and I believe that few writers can dispense with an editor, meaning someone sound, literate, sensitive, tough, and grown up. The mind and spirit boggle at the idea of delivering a day's work into the hands of children. Any day's work is the delicate, tentative product of a writer's idea, his dream, and his skill at that time in realizing it. So much conscious and subconscious planning, pruning, altering, so much growing is required to make a book, that to subject it each day to the perhaps cursory, perhaps biased, certainly unripe judgment of children seems to me like pulling up the carrots to find out if they're thriving.

A FOURTH writer, a man, took the astonishing position that there is no such thing as a child anyway, there are only human beings of varying size and potential. And these human beings, whom he must imagine as whittled down adults, are capable of grasping any idea, responding to any theme, provided, he says, it is presented to them by a writer with "a supreme command of language." Presumably he means his own. For my part, I would reserve the description "supreme command of language" for a very few writers in all the history of literature. And I most definitely insist that there is a category of human being properly labeled "child." I further insist that there are facts, concepts, and ideologies totally beyond this his range of interest, no matter who is commanding the language.

This human being, this child, is enchanting, imaginative, flexible, sensitive, intelligent, responsive, lovable—one could go on and on with happy adjectives. This child is also, as anyone who has had even brief contact with him knows, a barbarian, an untutored, self-serving, limited creature without taste, compassion, or more than the rudiments of judgment, who must be taught, by his elders and betters, how to conduct himself with decency and civility in a complex, frustrating world.

BY elders and betters I do not imply that all adults are better, or even, except in a chronological sense, older than all children. But, broadly speaking, there is an advantage accruing to age. Something is gained through the days and the years, through being educated and taught disciplines of mind and body; through loving, and sometimes losing those you love; through learning to live, for the most part, as if life were good and mankind immortal. This accumulation of courage and experience and, sometimes, wisdom is what makes an adult, what distinguishes him from the child, what gives him his quality. The most charming, the most intelligent, the most potentially valuable child does not possess this quality.

This last writer also says that he deplores the "patronizing phrase, Writing for Children." I find it a useful and accurate expression for a real and sometimes exalting profession that concerns itself with a real person—the child.

I've tried to remember what the fifth writer said, but cannot. However, since one's own type of shop talk is always interesting, I have over the years read other accounts by and about authors of children's books. Many of them seem to feel that it would be a good idea to have a college degree and helpful to have been a librarian, a social worker, a teacher, a pediatrician. Quite a few suggest that it's as well to have children of one's own; this seems practical, but it is not always practicable. In some cases, none of the foregoing is.

Now, suppose you have a person who has not finished college, perhaps not gone to one at all. Suppose he, or she, has no children of his own. Suppose, to be extreme, he doesn't even like children. Can he still write for them?

I think he can.

Now I come to my own definition of what makes a children's book writer. Assuming a talent for writing, I think what is required is that one be an ex-child, with a genuine respect for the condition and a long memory.

There is a sort of memory that does not so much recall as re-experience. be especially keen in the writer for children. If he has it, he needn't eavesdrop or bake cookies or otherwise attempt to keep in touch with his "audience." The audience, the child, is within him. There is, we all know, a child in everyone. In many if not most cases that child has receded to the outposts of one's awareness, and probably this is all to the good. But where the children's-book writer is concerned, the child is an immediately available, always present being. I do not mean that such a writer *is* a child, in that distasteful sense meant by some people when they say "all men are just grown-up little boys." I mean that he always has this child with him.

I can give examples from myself. All of us remember how long it seemed, when we were children, between one birthday and the next, one Christmas and the next; how, if something glorious were going to happen on Friday and here it was only Tuesday, then Friday was simply never going to arrive. We remember it. But I find, and I imagine most children's-book writers find, that the feeling still persists. If winter comes, then spring is lost forever.

Or, again, when I see a child, especially a rebellious child, standing with his feet planted firmly, his head thrown back to eye the looming creature of authority before him, I can feel again, physically, the fury and despair of being smaller than my antagonist. The inferior stature of the child is part of his daily cup, along with other ingredients, some delicious and exhilarating, some bitter, but all sharply, intensely tasted.

The essence of childhood and youth, I think, is this intensity of the present experience. Time, taste, custom, fatigue, experience—more briefly, a sense of relativity—limit us at length so that we don't suffer (should I say rejoice in? I don't think so) these violent extremes of thought and feeling. We learn to judge, to evaluate, to measure, to restrain ourselves. This, again, is what makes us adults, and therefore able, if we try, to help children understand and cope with their situation, which is so like early man's where every thunderclap came as a threat, every night as the end, and all that mattered was to keep this particular ego and libido going somehow.

This child I have within me, with me, undergoes from time to time what might be called caveman reactions, and I sometimes suffer the consequences and sometimes rue them. Still, I wouldn't do without her, because she is my familiar, from a world I've lost but am still fascinated by.

Every writer writes as much for himself as for his readers, but some of us, it seems, are addressing not our present selves but some distant, unrelinquished part of ourselves, which part is a child.

Dr. Sam Sebesta, Professor of Education at the University of Washington, is well known in the Pacific Northwest as an expert in children's literature.

He was contacted at his office at the University of Washington in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

He did not offer any personal opinions about the definition or criteria for realism, but suggested two resources which he believed would be helpful. He suggested "Constantino Georgiou's" book, and "Charlotte Huck's most recent book."

Although he could not cite the title of either book, he maintained that both were in the University collection Both books were located and found to be excellent resources.

Walt Morey made a short after-dinner speech and then spoke informally to a group of librarians on March 11, 1982 at Fort Worden, in Port Townsend, Washington.

He entertained the group with the tales of the true experiences behind his many stories. He described how he uses real places for the settings in his stories, and usually bases his characters on real people. He draws on his own varied experiences to create these people and places.

APPENDIX B

Novels Suggested For Study Which Were Rejected[1]

Author & Title	Reason for Rejection
Butterworth, *Under the Influence*	Did not depict a young adult actually parenting.
Edmonds, *Two Logs Crossing*	Unavailable.
Head, *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones*	Focused on teenage pregnancy and marriage.
Johnston, *Keeping Days*	Did not depict a young adult actually parenting.
Knudson, *You Are the Rain*	The young adults were involved in a struggle to survive, and neither performed an actual parenting role.
Lee, *The Rock and the Willow*	Did not depict a young adult actually parenting.
Major, *Hold Fast*	The young adults were involved in a struggle to survive, and neither performed an actual parenting role.
Peck, *Secrets of the Shopping Mall*	The young adults were involved in a struggle to survive, and neither performed an actual parenting role.
Wood, *Song of the Shaggy Canary*	The protagonist was an unwed mother caring for her own child.

[1]Complete bibliographic information is given in the bibliography of this paper.