

# Fiction in Educational Communications

The Canadian Journal of Educational Communication does not deal in fiction, but in facts. CJEC is a journal of the social sciences, combining the field of education on the one hand with sociology and communication on the other. CJEC is a forum for the best that is being written, researched, and produced in educational communications and technology in Canada.

And yet... was it not D.H. Lawrence who once wrote "Being a novelist, I consider myself superior to the saint, the scientist, the philosopher and the poet." Aesthetic philosopher Arthur Berndtson continues the point:

A painter sees colors better than does a physicist or a psychologist, and he consults no science in deciding how to unite colors on a canvas. A novelist probes the particulars and currents of human nature more fastidiously than does a psychologist and projects them into words by a process that cannot be duplicated in the laboratory. . . These methods rest upon a broad base of ordinary experience, which precedes experiment, and of common reason, which precedes measurement."

And what about the educational technologist? Do we operate too much in the cognitive domain, forgetting the affective? In this technological society, are we too prone to insist on precision, target population analyses, unambiguous behavioral objectives, systematic formative evaluation? "Surely," argues educator Elliot Eisner, "there needs to be a place for metaphor, poetic statement, the non-operational comment or insight, the descriptive assertion that one cannot measure. Why should we limit ourselves to one mode of discourse? Where is it inscribed that scientific propositions and logical analyses are the only legitimate ways to express what educators have experienced?"

Our proposal is simple: We wish to selectively reprint classic fiction which has, one way or another, educational media overtones, or at least metaphoric value to educational technologists. CJEC does not normally reprint. We shall however, waive that policy for this section. Although, let us hasten to add, we will welcome original fiction for this column as well. Fiction, we feel, has a place in this journal, as long as the purpose of

education includes the need to affect the soul as well as the intellect. Joseph Conrad, writing in the preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* explained: "My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you see."

A case in point is this month's story, "The Movies Come to Gull Point." The theme is the impact of a new technology, the motion picture, upon a small fishing village in Newfoundland. The story presents a microcosm of a technological impact... the like of which is not unfamiliar to those who are just discovering the potential and the fascination of the computer of our own day. A twist ending reflects the real world, namely that the characters have a total lack of understanding and a total lack of perspective of the latent and manifest impact of the technology upon them.

And now, we invite you to sit back, to put your feet up, to turn OFF your television set, and to take yourself back in time to the day that the movies first came to Gull Point. . . □

Four men were mending nets in a shack behind the fish wharf at Granny Cove. Spring had come grudgingly, but now the warm sun was melting the ice and sending steamy vapours from tarred roofs. The Cove front murmured with activity as all its men prepared for the sea.

The four worked in silence, seated on benches, half-hidden by the drab folds that hung from the cross-beams overhead, their hands flicking in and out among the meshes, tying, knotting, threading. All at once they paused and listened. There were new voices outside.

"Them's the two back from pulp-cuttin'," said Simon Holder. He was a small lean man.

"Wonder if they got their pay," said Dick Berry, a red-faced man with big bony shoulders.

The two working in the rear were young, and brothers, Ben and Matthew Crowdy, proud of being hired with Simon. Ben was only seventeen, and slim, but he carried himself as seriously as the other three.

"Ho, Willyum," shouted Berry as a man pased the open door. "Don't rush yourself. What's the word down along?"

The man came back and peered in at them. "Not much new," he said. "They're havin' movin' pictures . . ."

"Movin'!" Berry's mouth fell open. "How?"

"The man's got a machine'n engine to

drive her. He's over't Gull Point tonight givin' a showin'."

"Over't Gull Point!" Berry rose from his bench, his red face glowing. "Simon, let's go over?"

"What's he chargin'?" asked Simon.

"Twenty-five cents, but he's got good pictures. There's one . . ."

"Don't tell us," blurted Matthew. "That would spoil it. What say we go, Simon?" He had a solemn face, like Ben, but his eyes were bright.

Simon left his bench and went outside. The others followed him and they stood, gazing at the sea.

The ice was breaking up. The warm sun had been aided by a strong wind off land and a lane of black water was steadily widening along the foot of the cliffs, while smaller leads angled in all directions, opening as the pack surged and loosened. Southward, toward Gull Point, there seemed plenty of open sea.

"Risky," pronounced Simon.

"Chancy," agreed Berry, "but not too much."

"Wind's favourin', too," added Matthew.

There was a slow shrill screaming of the ice. Floes and pans were grinding together; the harsh noises never stilled.

Ben looked up. There were no clouds and the sky was a blue that seemed to reflect the endless ice.

"Looks fairish weather," he said, "but

it's comin' tonight."

"You boys got money?" asked Simon.

They shook their heads and Berry grinned.

"That makes a dollar," Simon said gravely. "That's a lot of money."

"There ain't never been," said Ben, "movin' pictures up here. I never seen any in my life."

"Bet she's open to the Point," said Berry. "We'd do fine with a lugsail."

Simon rubbed his salt-bitten chin. They four were the best in the Cove. "Git geared," he said suddenly.

"It's six mile," Simon said an hour later. They had launched their dory and were well into the wide lead but the lugsail was proving a menace. A stiffer breeze caught them and tipped the boat. He pulled the canvas in. "Mebbe we're fools."

They had lost much time. Matthew had broken a thole pin in his eagerness and they had not turned back to repair it. They had trusted in the sail, and his oars were idle.

"The wind'll be strong outside," said Berry. He was rowing and he grunted his words.

They were true enough. Once away from the shelter of the high black cliffs, the wind caught the dory and they swung along sharply. There were many wide lanes and the sea was running higher than it had seemed, and spray flung over them.

Simon steered with a long sweep and Matthew was seated next him, squatted low but ready to lend a hand. As they swayed with the dory all four seemed a jumble of sou-westers and oilskins.

They did not attempt conversation. The shrieking, jarring crashes of the ice mingled with the whistling of the breeze and drowned all lesser sounds. The rapidly-widening lane they were in became a sea of racing, tumbling water that spewed spray as it struck the dory. Simon's oilskins dripped and his cheeks were wet but his expression never changed. He was gauging every wave with the instinct of one born to the sea.

Suddenly each man braced himself for action. A loose floe hove in their path and the waves pitched it about dangerously. Simon and Berry used all their strength and skill as they managed to avoid it, but neither man spoke. Matthew was bailing instantly and they moved slowly until he had scooped from the dory the gallons of water shipped during the swinging manoeuvre. It seemed, in that short time, to become night.

The rocky point behind them had cut off the sun as it sank rapidly, and with its going the wind keened to a penetrating chill. The darkness added greatly to their risks and Matthew peered ahead.

"She's started to fog," he shouted. "She's a bank now."

The shore, hazy before, had become mist-drowned, shrouded with a thick white creeping veil. It seemed to permeate the air.

"She's come behind the same," yelled Ben.

They were half their journey and a swirling blanket of gray vapours closed about them. They would have to chance their passage ahead where the contour of the coast veered so that the slow-moving field ice might bar their way.

It was Matthew who first saw that they had entered a wide lane and were between shifting ice. He peered again.

"Keep straight on!" he cried. Short waves were deluging the boat with freezing spray. Berry rowed with quick strokes, and the roar of wind and grinding ice filled the night.

The water became smoother. Matthew reached and touched Berry on the back and at the signal the bigger man changed places with him. They were tense and watchful; only men of their experience could know the risk of a channel between rafted ice. Deep booming sounds seemed to pass over them as though they had sunk in a trough of the sea, and it grew darker.

"Look!" yelled Ben. "She's closin' in." There was a muttered undertone beneath the booming and their lane of open

water had narrowed to feet in width.

They slipped awkwardly in their seal-skin boots as each man scrambled onto the floe, but they secured footing and with desperate hurried strength dragged the heavy dory from the water. It taxed them to their utmost and no one spoke. The ice was an uneven surging field and a blurred grayness covered everything.

"She's bad," said Berry. "We should have . . ."

He did not finish. There was a crash of giant floes colliding and they were sprawled beside the dory. In an instant the night was a wilder chaos of wind and clamour.

"Watch out!" Simon's voice rose above the tumult like a cracking whip. "She's breakin'!"

The floe buckled. It rose and lowered under them. There were sudden surgings that pitched them about. They seized the dory sides and pushed landward. The roaring of surf at the face of the floe came clearly.

"Watch her!" It was a scream more than a shout. The ice was parting.

The floe rocked and settled. Water sloshed over the ice, reached them. There was another settling.

"There!" yelled Ben.

The field had opened and the sea drove into the vent with foaming fury. It poured over the ice to meet them. Then, its weight, and the driving surf, heaved the floe.

They slid backward in the wash. Ben, caught by the dory, fell, and water washed over him. He rose, sobbing with his immersion, clinging to the dory, and, as if a signal were given, they rushed the boat toward the open water. The lane had widened into a broad lead.

Again the floe surged, and the dory slid into the water. Ben leaped into it, tilting it dangerously. Matthew sprang in beside him, rocking it to a safer keel. Berry had given a great thrust forward to clear them from the ice and as he sprang he lunged against Simon, knocking him backward.

For a heartbeat it seemed they must capsize. The churning water had caught them as the dory took its plunge. Berry grasped his oars and threw his weight against the surge. Behind them, in the screaming murk, Simon was lost to view.

Ben had seized Simon's sweep and they toiled to bring the dory about. The lane was a smother of surf. Danger hovered over every move and the water boiled with changing currents.

They drove back alongside, catching, with perfect co-ordination, a minute lull at the ice edge, and Simon gauging their move, joined them. It was a risky plunge, challenging all their chances, but once more Berry's strength saved the dory and

# The Movies Come to Gull Point

By

Will R. Bird

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## AMTEC '82 MEDIA FESTIVAL

then they had swung away and Ben was bailing.

In the thick darkness the surf seemed wilder than before but the worst was soon behind them. Then, just ahead, a pinpoint of light shone steadily.

Within ten minutes they were in calmer waters, and lamp glows began to pierce the gloom. They landed and hurried Ben, shaking and almost numbed with cold, to the nearest house.

"Us is from Granny Cove," announced Simon. "Ben were wet on the ice. Could us dry him here?"

"Sure, the stove's red-hot." A woman wrapped in a thick jacket and ready to leave for the hall where the movies were to be shown, answered them. "I'll git a rig for him to put on and his'll dry while we're gone."

Ben was shaking as with ague and tiny pools formed on the floor beside him as the warmth of the stove softened his frozen clothing. He drank a scalding mixture the women provided and his trembling ceased. He stripped his sodden clothing and Matthew ranged it on a chair back alongside the stove. Then Ben dressed in a makeshift outfit and they followed the path the woman had taken.

The building where the movies were being shown was packed with people. It was a low-roofed structure and heated by a huge box stove. There were high odours of perspiration and many faces were beaded with moisture. Children were sandwiched among their elders and every seat was taken. Simon led the way along one wall and they stood against it, tightly wedged by others who crowded after. Ben struggled from the borrowed reefer that blanketed him.

"We're lucky," he gasped, "she's jist startin'."

There were gasps and murmurings as the lamps were extinguished and the hum of a motor began. Headings appeared on the screen and a dozen voices tried to read them.

"Let teacher read 'em," bellowed a husky voice at the rear.

"She Knew She Was Wrong," a high-pitched voice shrilled in the darkness as "teacher" assumed her task. "Pretty Virginia..."

The audience had stilled. It was seeing

the incredible... mirrored eating places... ladies with bare backs and cigarettes... bewildering dances... racing cars... a bathing beach teeming with thousands. And one face dominated.

"See that one!" said Berry hoarsely. "Her's..."

"Keep shut," ordered Simon in a sibilant whisper.

They watched the heroine driving in city traffic and there were cries of admiration.

"Ho!" shouted Berry. "Look at she." He clapped his hands.

"She's won'erful sharp in steerin'," responded Simon, "but..." He couldn't express himself.

"Her smokes," objected Ben.

Another picture began and all voices stilled. It was a story of rival airmen, and the planes in action did marvellous stunting. A flight of machines gave a thrilling performance, all manner of stunt flying.

Berry tensed, his big hands gripping a seat back. Simon breathed with sharp little intakes. Ben and Matthew gave shrill exclamations, unable to restrain themselves.

"They're hittin'!"

"No-yes-there!"

"Lookit-lookit-lookit!"

A dozen voices yelled with him. The airmen were shooting earthward at dizzy speed, headed toward each other.

There was a dull grinding sound and the screen went blank.

A lamp was lighted and the operator of the movie machine worked desperately with various tools. Then he came forward.

"Sorry, folks," he said, "but the machin's broke and I've got to send the piece away. I can't show any more."

There were sighs of disappointment but no one gave criticism. They began filing from the building and the night was filled with excited voices.

Ben went to change his clothes again and the woman insisted on them stopping to drink scalding tea and to eat slices of hard bread.

"Stay the night," she urged. "I've blankets enough to fix you up on the kitchen floor."

"No," refused Simon. "The fog's cleared and she's light as day. We've got a

mortal sight of work to do, gettin' ready to fish."

Berry ate and drank hugely but said nothing. The unexpected ending of the show had given him vast disappointment.

It was breaking day as the dory swung to the wharf at Granny's Cove. The sea had been much rougher than they anticipated and they had been forced to keep near the shore line all the way. For hours there had been but the creak of boat timbers and the slap of heavy water; each was silent, and dullminded.

A slight breeze stirred the morning. It was from the west and warm. There would be a perfect day. The sunrise began in a fire of orange and crimson that merged into soft pinks and changing blues. The heavens were a mass of colour.

The light spread over the hills and reached the sleeping houses. It found iced places in the hollows and they glittered like jewels.

They dragged the dory to its landing and stood away from it. Ben was bruised and stiff. Matthew had lost a mitten and each was conscious of clothing damp with spray.

"We're back," said Simon tersely, "but it were worth it."

"Sure," agreed Berry, yawning mightily. "That girl were a prime one."

"It must be great," said Matthew, "to live where you kin see won'erful sights all the time."

The light strengthened and the sea was blue as sapphire where the sun rays reached it slantingly. Still they stood, as if each were labouring with thoughts they could not put into words. Then Simon spat and faced them.

"I don't know what youse think," he said, "but takin' all them risks to make a picture don't seem right to me."

Matthew nodded gravely. "us been thinkin' just that," he said. "It's for nothin' but pleasin' and it's queer they ain't laws to stop it."

"Sure," added Ben, "there should be a law ag'in it. They might have been killed."

There was no further comment. Smoke began to curl from a chimney. Ben yawned again. They had expressed that which stirred them most, so they turned and filed soberly to their homes. □

### By Sid Greenstone

The AMTEC '82 Media Festival Awards were presented in Winnipeg on June 7th. There were 58 entrants this year. The competition was keen and a challenge to judge. There were 22 awards presented: 6 awards of excellence and sixteen awards of merit. The Panasonic Award recipient was TVOntario for its production of "MUSIC BOX: BEAT AND TEMPO".

The awards presented by category and class, are as follows:

### AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

**Category: Videotape**  
**Class: Post-Secondary**  
 Title: MUSIC BOX: BEAT AND TEMPO  
 Produced by: TVOntario (Panasonic Award Recipient)

**Category: Motion Pictures**  
**Class: Government Media Agency**  
 Title: CAPITAL  
 Produced by: National Film Board of Canada

**Category: Sound Slide**  
**Class: School System**  
 Title: OPERATION MOCKINGBIRD  
 Produced by: The Grey County Board of Education

**Class: Post-Secondary**  
 Title: SEEING: THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD  
 Produced by: Memorial Univeristy of Newfoundland

**Class: Government Media Agency**  
 Title: JOHNSTON CREEK EDUKIT: BRISON BY WATER AND ICE  
 Produced by: Access Alberta

**Class: Student**  
 Title: GEORGINA STIRLING  
 Produced by: Pam Hiscock, Memorial University of Newfoundland

### AWARDS OF MERIT

**Category: Videotape**  
**Class: Post-Secondary**  
 Title: MUSIC OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION: AN INTRODUCTION  
 Produced by: Carleton University

Title: DEVELOPMENT IN A DOWN SYNDROME INFANT FROM 12 to 24 MONTHS  
 Produced by: University of Manitoba

Title: CAUSE OF DEATH  
 Produced by: University of Calgary

**Class: Government Media Agency**  
 Title: PUTTING IT IN PERSPECTIVE  
 Produced by: Manitoba Department of Education

Title: MI'KMAQ  
 Produced by: Nova Scotia Education Media Services/CBC Maritime Region

**Class: Student**  
 Title: S-S-SNAKES  
 Produced by: Society for Exploring Television with Children

**Class: Other**  
 Title: NASENOSCOPY AND THE TREATMENT OF NASAL SPEECH  
 Produced by: Health Sciences Campus Services, Instructional Media Services, University of Manitoba

Title: PAPER FOR SPECIALTY PRINTING SERVICES  
 Produced by: Pulp and Paper Institute of Canada

Title: ATRAUMATIC FACE LIFT  
 Produced by: Royal Victoria Hospital

### Category: Motion Picture

**Class: Post Secondary**  
 Title: THE OZONE STORY  
 Produced by: York University

**Category: Motion Picture**  
**Class: Government Media Agency**  
 Title: JOE'S GYM  
 Produced by: Manitoba Department of Education

**Category: Sound Filmstrip**  
**Class: Government Media Agency**  
 Title: THEY ALWAYS TAKE ME FOR GRANTED: WOMEN AT WORK IN CANADA  
 Produced by: National Film Board of Canada

**Category: Sound Slide**  
**Class: School System**  
 Title: WOOD SCREWS  
 Produced by: Elementary Industrial Arts Committee/Saskatoon Board of Education

Title: A LANGUAGE THROUGH EXPERIENCE SERIES: "BANKING"  
 Produced by: Tom Chan, The Winnipeg School Division No. 1

**Class: Government Media Agency**  
 Title: THE ENVELOPE PLEASE  
 Produced by: Manitoba Department of Education

**Class: Other**  
 Title: THE PRN PATIENT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM  
 Produced by: Health Sciences Centre, Winnipeg □