à linge," (9) des yeux brillants "comme des fourchettes à fondue," (63) d'une mémoire aussi déficiente qu' "un fromage dans lequel le temps aurait creusé des trous." (25) Si, au sein d'une âpre discussion, le chasseur "se met à suer à grosses gouttes," il faut bien avouer que "ça jette un peu d'eau sur le feu. Mais ça ne l'éteint pas." (63) La question rebattue: "Quelle mouche t'a donc piqué?" suscite cet aparté plein d'humour: "Avec tous les insectes qui volettent autour du système d'éclairage, notez qu'on a amplement le choix." (13)

Le plaisir procuré par ces trouvailles langagières est malheureusement gâté. Dans la violence faite à la langue écrite, Poupart n' évite pas les tournures triviales, les québécismes et les négligences de style. S'y ajoutent deux erreurs typographiques aux pages 53 — "autant quant *et* lui" — et 129 — "*la* chasseur"-. La portée pédagogique apparaît par ailleurs minée par un excès d'ironie et des suggestions répétées à des actes d'une brutalité, d'une monstruosité gratuites. Le livre manque d'une certaine rigueur, il est inégal. Les illustrations, par trop caricaturales quand elles ne sont pas hors sujet, n'atténuent pas les imperfections du texte.

***Marie Naudin*** *est professeur de littérature française et québécoise à l'Université du Connecticut aux Etats-Unis.*

## DEVILS OF VARIOUS SORTS

***The devil's diamond,*** Carroll Bishop. Illus. Anna Maria Gruda. Temenos Productions, Toronto, 1984. 40 pp. $12.95 cloth ISBN 0-920189-00-8; ***The caves of Klydor,*** Douglas Hill. Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1984. 118 pp. $11.95 cloth ISBN 0-575-03413-0.

In his important essay "On fairy stories" from *Tree and leaf,* J.R.R. Tolkien defines the fairy tale as "one which touches on or uses Faerie, whatever its own main purpose may be: satire, adventure, morality, fantasy. Faerie itself may perhaps most nearly be translated by Magic — but it is magic of a peculiar mood and power, at the furthest pole from the vulgar devices of the laborious, scientific, magician." Tolkien's statement is instructive for a couple of reasons: first of all it tries to define what later in the same essay Tolkien calls the "Secondary World" of the fairy tale, by which he means the imaginative context of the work itself — a context that soars beyond the limits of rationality into the realm of the mysterious, the perplexing, the enchanting, the spellbinding, the wonderful. Secondly his definition implies that within this "faerie" context the writer infuses or sets his tale's "main purpose," which may be one of a number of various purposes, "satire, adventure, morality, fantasy." In general terms it is hard to argue with Tolkien's definition; the works of Perrault, the Grimm

Brothers and John Ruskin's *The king of the Golden River* among many others give substantial empirical weight to Tolkien's position. Tolkien has outlined for us the fairy tale recipe or formula, a recipe whose ingredients most of us who have read the classic fairy tales are all too familiar with. It, therefore, takes a brave author indeed to try his or her hand at writing a modern day fairy tale, for such a work immediately invites comparison with the genre's masters and also risks the Charybdis of cleverness by trying to avoid the Scylla of slavish imitation. For these reasons, it is probably easier to write a bad fairy tale than to write badly in almost any other literary genre.

Carroll Bishop's *The devil's diamond* is a modern day fairy tale, described in the publisher's blurb as "The new Christmas classic." It is a pricey but handsome book with a clean and eye-pleasing text accompanied by charming illustrations vaguely reminiscent of Blake and Beardsley. The story, divided into two parts, is a simple one, as befits the genre. In the first part the protagonist, Princess Sally, lives in a kingdom "not so very far from this one" with her loving King and Queen parents. In this kingdom it is customary for children on their birthdays to give a present to their parents to show them their love. On her eighth birthday Sally is visited by the Devil disguised as a monk; he convinces the Princess that the presents she is thinking of giving her parents are inappropriate and worthless. Instead he encourages her to give them a diamond which he has in his possession. In her innocence, the Princess agrees to his suggestion and presents her parents with the gift. Immediately the King and Queen are blinded in one eye each and the earlier loving and peaceful kingdom begins to languish and deteriorate.

Part two opens with Princess Sally, diamond in tow setting out on a journey to restore her parents to health. After receiving various kindly meant but generally unhelpful pieces of advice from grown-ups she meets along the way, she encounters a blind young male flute player called Heron who finally leads her to a "place where the star shone above and the shepherds watched." Needless to say they meet a baby in a stable who turns the evil diamond into one that radiates love from its facets. As a consequence, the King and Queen regain their sight, the kingdom is restored to health, Heron is cured of his blindness and even the Devil is described as "tired and ashamed of his silly old games." An interesting twist to the traditional "they lived happily ever after" ending is found at the conclusion of *The devil's diamond.* The narrator implies that it is within the reader's power rather than the writer's to determine if "happily ever after" will obtain. At its conclusion, then, the story suddenly moves beyond its fictional bounds into the real world to include all its readers and listeners. The implication is that the story of Princess Sally is finally the story of Everyman, tempted by evil and occasionally succumbing to it, but in the end turning back not without effort and struggle to the refuge of the divine babe in the stable. A happy ever after conclusion is, therefore, "up to us."

The *Devil's diamond* meets Tolkien's two criteria for the fairy tale: it

establishes an appropriately wonderful faerie realm within which the author sets her "main purpose," namely the moral struggles that all Christians meet and confront through their lives. The work also contains many traditional fairy tale ingredients: a "once upon a time" opening, the presence of a King and Queen and their innocent child, a wicked witch — here the Devil himself — a temptation and a fall. Like Browning's "Childe Roland," Ruskin's *The king of the Golden River* and Eliot's *The waste land* to name only three, it also borrows material from the medieval romance and the qrail legends. Princess Sally's fall from grace (reminiscent of Eve's) results in wounded rulers and a blighted and wounded nature; her quest finally helps restore those rulers, the land and its inhabitants to their former happier state.

In my view Carroll Bishop's *The devil's diamond* if not "The new Christmas classic" is at least a successful and well-written piece of work. Although clearly Christian in its orientation, the work is not offensive for this reason, largely because the author does not allow her "main purpose" to propagandize the story out of existence or render it a humourless piece of zealotry. In short, in this story Bishop has given us a well-controlled and unobtrusive allegorical morality drama in the form of a fairy tale.

For slightly older readers, a different kind of devil appears in an equally good book by Douglas Hill — not a fairy tale this time, but an example of science fiction. It's sometime in the future and earth is now in the hands of a totalitarian Organization which, sometime in the past, had taken control of things after the "Virus decades" and destroyed human civilization. The Organization, aware that the earth is now devoid of its former natural wealth and resources, must exploit other worlds for new sources of wealth. Hence it establishes a Colonization Section (ColSec) which locates new worlds among the stars and populates them with particular types of colonists: those rebellious earth-dwellers who struggle against the cloying oppression of the Organization's rule. Such is the background of Douglas Hill's ripping good science fiction yarn *The caves of Klydor*, the second volume of a proposed trilogy. Not having yet read volume one (which I now intend to do having enjoyed this one so much) entitled *Exiles of ColSec* I cannot say what narrative material precedes this present work, but if it's as exciting and action packed as this one, it shouldn't be missed.

The present story details the exploits of five rebellious teenagers who have escaped earth for the planet Klydor where they hope to establish a new and freer life. Unbeknown to them at the beginning of their quest for freedom, their planet is also home for a rebel and resistance leader, Bren Latham, whose unorthodox anti-Organization activities have made him public enemy number one in the Orgainization's eyes. In an attempt to reduce his influence by capturing him, the Organization sends to Klydor a group of CeeDees (Civil Defenders) described as "the cruel and violent security force of the Organization." And to make Latham's situation all the more hopeless, the CeeDees "elite force" — the Crushers — are the ones on his tail. The novel opens with the

teenagers rafting down a Klydor river from which they narrowly escape death by drowning and by sea monster. After a number of other exciting and rapid fire adventures including separation from each other in an eerie and mysterious cave, and the near death of one of them at the hands (tentacles) of a razor-backed cave monster, some of the children meet and make friends with the initially perplexing, mysterious but life-saving Latham. He turns out, of course, to be as morally solid as the rocks of Klydor themselves. The story then becomes a good guys-bad guys chase through the caves and badlands of Klydor as the five children and their new ally, Latham, test their mettle against the Crushers and their formidale leader Captain Warreck.

Those of a psychoanalytic bent will have a ball with this novel. There are caves and ravines a-plenty here as well as all sorts of menacing mouth imagery, suggesting perhaps devouring and loss of identity. Rites of passage hunters will also be happy with this novel since in it there is a lot of hurried maturation as the result of the numerous crises in which the teenagers find themselves. In other words, here too there is a "Secondary World." But all of these more arcane elements are finally things inessential. *The caves of Klydor* is a good children's book — which is to say it is a good book — because its author knows both how to create story and character. And in the case of the latter, what is most remarkable is the particular and distinctive voices that each of the novel's seven main characters has. If your New Year's resolution was to introduce yourself or your teenager to one science fiction book in 1985, you might try *The caves of Klydor*.

***Douglas H. Parker*** *teaches English at Laurentian University and is the author of articles on Renaissance drama and Reformation literature.*

## LIFE AND GROWTH AND CHANGE: ALWAYS A JOURNEY

***Up to Low,*** Brian Doyle. Groundwood, Douglas and McIntyre, 1982. 113 pp. $6.95 paper. ISBN 0-88899-17-0.

This book for adolescent readers tells Young Tommy's own story of how he comes to terms with changes: changes in his life after the death of his mother; changes in the world around him as he moves out of childhood into adolescence; changes in his relationships with the adults around him. As the cover notes state, perhaps a trifle portentously, Young Tommy and his friend Baby Bridget discover that "loving and healing and dying are not always what they seem."

In the story, Young Tommy journeys with his father up to Low, where they have a summer cabin. It is a journey well known to Young Tommy, and one