

à la fin. Mais que révèle son imaginaire? Que transmet-il, inconsciemment peut-être, à ses jeunes lecteurs? Interrogeons-nous d'abord sur l'utilisation fascinante des doubles. L'opposition humains/robots structure l'univers qu'il a inventé. On la retrouve entre le vrai Michel et son sosie robot, et aussi entre Virginia et Shade. Les Actifs qui de plus en plus sont remplacés par des robots dans la Nouvelle Ville tiennent aussi de cette thématique. Quant aux Inactifs ne sont-ils pas eux-mêmes "manipulables", pareils aux robots? Comme leur nom l'indique, ils sont inactifs socialement, préoccupés seulement par un sport qu'ils regardent passivement. J'y vois la critique d'une population en transe devant tout spectacle et celle aussi des dangers du vedettariat. Signalons qu'une secte a fait littéralement son dieu de Michel Lenoir. Le fait qu'il est difficile de différencier entre l'humain et la machine et même qu'on peut relier les deux pour créer des monstres pleins de pouvoir, rappellent les dangers de la science jusqu'à la phobie (cf. la connotation négative de Swindler, l'escroc, et de Shade, son ombre féminine).

L'étude des couples est aussi intéressante en raison de l'opposition humains/robots qu'ils présentent: Michel et Virginia *versus* Swindler et Shade. (Cette utilisation des noms français et anglais est-elle ironique?) De plus, est-ce signe des temps, nous assistons à une inversion de la représentation traditionnelle des sexes. Alors que l'héroïne représente l'intelligence et l'audace, le héros qui est joueur de hockey dépend de son corps robuste et agile et demeure timide. En fait, il faut s'en réjouir, tout le roman anathémise l'usage de la violence et même de la force: ainsi les adorateurs de Michel Lenoir sont des fanatiques dangereux et les dirigeants révolutionnaires sont de mauvaise foi. Au contraire, les Mages qui ont des pouvoirs psychiques particuliers recherchent une solution pacifique à l'injustice.

Un livre, donc, passionnant pour les jeunes adolescents et dont l'imaginaire, selon moi, invite à la prudence dans l'usage de la science et quant aux dangers d'être spectateur passif.

Victor-Laurent Tremblay est professeur de littérature à l'Université Wilfrid Laurier.

TIME TRAVEL TURBULENCE

Beyond the future. Johanne Massé. Trans. Frances Morgan. Black Moss Press, 1990. 102 pp., \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-88753-210-1; **Lost time.** Charles Montpetit. Trans. Frances Morgan. Black Moss Press, 1990. 116 pp., \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-88753-208-X.

As the title clearly indicates, *Beyond the future* is a piece of science fiction, complete with time-travel, spacecrafts and an underground city. The story of

space shuttle commander Marc Greg and his crew is essentially straightforward: amidst a war with the Soviet Union, North America needs to send a shuttle into space to repair the damaged main communications and detection satellite. Commander Greg is assisted by astrophysicist and mathematician Dr. Valerie Ellis while biologist Dr. Samuel Morris is sent along to underscore the official story about a routine flight. So far, so good. The three have barely reached the shuttle's orbit when Earth disappears in a nuclear explosion. A few moments later, or so it seems to the crew, Valerie's instruments pronounce radioactivity levels to be negligible and Earth's atmosphere safe for re-entry. The adventure begins.

The crew have come back to Earth and landed in what they knew to be Australia. "Australia", however, is covered in snow and mutant vegetation, the temperature a bitter -36°C. Between being captured by "Irradiates", the primitive inhabitants of Australia's surface, and being rescued by Yarik and Yana, inhabitants of the underground city, the story unwinds at breakneck speed: Valerie is wounded and abandoned while Marc and Samuel are tied up and left to die in an icy cave. Valerie manages to return to the spacecraft where she is discovered by Yana and Yarik. They in turn bring her to the underground city in a shroud of secrecy because she is a contaminated person and then return to the outside world during a frightful blizzard ("fmug" as it is called) to retrieve the antidote to the poison in Valerie's wound. Almost incidentally they also rescue Marc and Samuel. The four manage, under great duress, to return to the underground city, only to find that the entrances are closed due to damage caused by a sudden earthquake.

This tightly packed narrative of which I have provided but an outline serves to reveal that Valerie is in fact Yana's twin sister from the era of the Six Days War in Israel. The year 1967 was reached by Valerie and Yana's parents by means of time-travel. After the birth of the twins, the war separated the family and only Yana and her father returned to the safety of post-nuclear Australia.

As interesting as this may sound, the reader is apparently expected to be a master of time-travel himself, simply to keep up with the story. A maximum amount of action is squeezed rather disjointedly into short chapters and even shorter episodes, the result being that *Beyond the future* reads more like a television script than a continuous story with an otherwise convincing plot.

Lost time by Charles Montpetit is also a story essentially about time-travel. Here, however, the presentation of the plot is not only well-paced but at times even ingenious. Following a fight with fellow schoolmate Christopher, Marianne locks herself into a supply closet at Henley Collegiate where she literally collides with the Entity. The Entity is a mass of energy that invades Marianne's body – quite by accident – and thus discovers three-dimensional existence. Marianne has a body tied to time and space which – quite by accident – absorbs the capacity to travel through time on the sole condition that she leave her body behind. At first, the two engage in a raging battle of strength and wits

which neither can win. Having reached a mutual "terrain d'entente," the Entity embarks the two on a voyage through time in quest of another body for Marianne. The problem is, understandably, that no one is truly willing to give up his or her body while still alive unless in acute danger. Thus Marianne is thrust into trial and tribulation. She passes from being a nineteenth-century school teacher on the verge of being shot by her former students to a sacrificial virgin in the year 470 AD who needs to escape from a dragon's gut. Each time a new body is found, the Entity tries to abandon Marianne to her new fate, usually none too promising. Marianne, though, will not compromise, much less sacrifice herself, and eventually the two return to the time of the original fight in the schoolyard. With 20/20 hindsight, Marianne and the Entity invade Christopher's brain and arrange the outcome of their fight to be such that it is Christopher, and not Marianne, who is in the supply closet at the precise moment at which the Entity makes contact.

This very clever story of time-travel is interspersed with the author's own brand of "narrative travel" during which his voice jumps off the page to speak to the reader. Montpetit calls "Cut!" to ask the reader: "Have you ever dreamed you were falling down an elevator shaft?" (11). He explains the notion of time-travel with: "Take yourself, for example. Right now, you probably think you're stationary, your rear-end comfortably installed in your chair... But if the planet was invisible, you would appear to spin around its core at a speed of 1, 608 kilometres an hour" (15). And, once the lesson in physics is over, he suggests: "To get the full effect of the return trip, please read this chapter backwards" (28). He very audaciously interrupts the pursuit of the nineteenth-century school teacher to explain the rules of a card game that will enable readers to re-enact the scene together with friends! In short, Montpetit has gone far beyond the conventional limitations of literature to reach out and touch young readers. His story, as well as his technique, should readily entice an audience of any age.

Barbara Kraus has an M.A. in translation and is currently working on a Ph.D in Canadian Literature. She has been working at the Université canadienne en France since 1987, first as Language Coordinator and then as Assistant to the Dean.

JOURNEYS OF MIND AND FANCY

Jeremy's decision. Ardyth Brott. Illus. Michael Martchenko. Oxford University Press, 1990. 32 pp., \$14.95 cloth. ISBN 0-19-540-775-X; **Nicholas at the library.** Hazel Hutchins. Illus. Ruth Ohi. Annick Press, 1990. Unpag., \$14.95, \$4.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55037-134-7, 1-55037-132-0; **Anniranni and Mollymishi the wild-haired doll.** C. Drew Lamm. Illus. Ruth Ohi. Annick