mes qui enrichissent l'intrigue; alors qu'au début c'est la sexualité de l'adolescent qui domine (le récit commence d'ailleurs par les premières menstrues de Marie-Laure), le thème est abandonné au bout de quelques chapitres en faveur du thème de l'aventure. Pour peu que ces deux thèmes aient été intégrés, l'auteur aurait pu établir une perspective plus cohérente. Ainsi, le récit des aventures parfois irréelles aurait été soutenu par les préoccupations réelles des adolescents.

On aurait tort pourtant d'insister sur ces faiblesses techniques au détriment d'autres aspects très positifs. Mentionnons surtout les bons rapports qui existent entre les générations. Non seulement Marie-Laure et Jacques jouissent-ils de la confiance de leur excentrique voisin, encore ont-ils d'excellents rapports avec leurs parents. Ajoutons aussi que le récit animé, qui relève à la fois de la science-fiction et de la science naturelle, ne manque pas de suspense. Ce sont des qualités qui m'engagent à recommander *Pohénégamook* aux adolescents et adolescentes de onze à quinze ans.

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THIS DAY OUR DAILY EVIL

The war at Fort Maggie, Raymond Bradbury. Kids Can Press, 1982. 64 pp. $3.95 paper. ISBN 0-919964-36-2; ***Simon Jesse's journey,*** Stan Dragland. Douglas & McIntyre, 1983. 120 pp. $6.95 paper. ISBN 0-88899-025-1; ***Black Hat and the Willie Chronicle,*** Mary Ann Lipscombe. Borealis Press, 1983. 34 pp. $16.95, 6.95 cloth & paper. ISBN 0-88887-963-6, 0-8887-962-2; ***The Druid's tune,*** O.R. Melling. Puffin, 1983. 240 pp. $15.95, $7.95 cloth & paper. ISBN 0-72-2659-164, 0-14-031-664-7; ***Terror of the cocoons,*** Judy Stubbs. Borealis Press, 1983. 50 pp. $14.95, $6.95 cloth & paper. ISBN 0-8887-962-8, 0-88887-960-1.

Every day, millions of men and women around the world pray to be delivered from evil — and it is well that they do so. It is well that they do so because there is a grim truth to the serpent's promise in the book of Genesis that "your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3.5). The grimness lies in the fact that, as fallen creatures, we know good *only* by knowing evil. The encounter with evil, in all its fascinating and seductive possibilities, is essential to our capacity to know and choose the good.

That we, as fallen creatures, know good only by knowing evil is borne out by a study of the literature of fantasy. Consider, for example, that moment in *The Hobbit* (1937) when Bilbo confronts Gollum deep under the Goblins' mountain. Bilbo is isolated, cut off from his companions; and the horror of the situation is emphasised by the fact that Gollum and Bilbo, the size of young children, have met in a game of life and death in the dark. In the course of their eerie game of riddles, Bilbo realizes that his one chance of survival is to kill Gollum. But then Bilbo, in his moment of extremity, redeems himself, realizing that Gollum has long been as he is now: "miserable, alone, lost." Against all prudence and cold-blooded common sense, Bilbo's perception of his kinship with Gollum triumphs over the blind moment of self-preservation.

The point of this episode is not just that Bilbo spares Gollum; the point is that it is not until he confronts his dark brother in the tunnel under the mountain that Bilbo discovers his proper capacity for mercy. In the depths of the mountain, Bilbo enters into the depths of himself; his compassion is real because — and only because — the evil he encounters there is real. So the encounter with evil — with a sense of what he himself could become — is as essential to Bilbo as it is to Marlowe in Conrad's *Heart of darkness.* And so Tolkien's paradigm suggests that the treatment, the realisation, of evil is one criterion by which fantasy may be judged.

The deftness with which Tolkien handles evil is particularly apparent when we set "Riddles in the dark" beside the five novels under consideration here. Of these five, all but one are works of fantasy, and all confirm the proposition that a novel's treatment of evil can be an index to the overall quality of the novel. In Raymond Bradbury's *The war at Fort Maggie,* for example, the encounter with the forces of evil is central to the plot. A Grade Six class, on a field trip to study a siege that took place at Fort Margaret in 1726, run afoul of a motorcycle gang. When their teachers fall ill with food poisoning, the students must re-enact the siege as they defend themselves against the bikers. Needless to say, the kids emerge triumphant, and law and order are restored. The plot line is familiar enough; it is that of any number of romantic comedies. Where the novel's real weakness betrays itself is in its handling of evil. For all their bikes and black leather, the outlaws of The Devil's Horde are really Koala bears on Harley Davidson's. When they curse, some mysterious speech impediments renders their oaths tastefully garbled ("Gettacracklyfuggyellootavere!"), and their most dastardly deed is the stealing of a kite belonging to one of the children. Without insisting on an orgy of murder, rape and plunder, one can see why this novel, like the mirror of Tolkien's Galadriel, is "dangerous as a guide to deeds." The problem is not just that in a novel which purports to be realistic, the prospect of a grade-six class worsting a gang of hashish-crazed outlaw bikers requires a willing rupture of disbelief — we need look no further than Hunter S. Thompson's *Hell's angels* (1967) to see that; the real problem is that evil in this novel is the evil of an animated cartoon. The children

confront only a celluloid menace — and so achieve only a celluloid victory.

A similar insipidity characterizes *Black Hat and the Willie Chronicle,* a novel subverted by its attempt to be just too too cutesy-clever. Black Hat is a witch who lives alone in the Tarry-Not Forest; Willie is a mynah bird who enters the forest and eventually wins her friendship. Much is to be forgiven those who write books, and the charitable reader can wince at, but forgive, such unfortunate strokes of wit as the novel's concluding sentence: "Needless to say, they both, (or should I say, they all?) lived happily Canadian ever after!" But what is one to think of a novel which asks us to believe that "Black Hat, wicked witch of Tarry-Not Forest, black as black could be, ebony darkness beyond light, wicked and fearsome crone" is also an *habituée* of suburban shopping malls: "I just bought this robe at our 'Really Old' Witches Bazaar. It cost me two bats' wings and a mouse tail."? Black Hat is about as dangerous as a Bavarian Cream, and even the most charitable reader must think wistfully of the Brothers Grimm, and their good honest witches, those purists who understood that their true business in life was to lurk in the forest and devour unwary children.

A more ambitious novel, and one which adheres more faithfully to traditional models, is *Simon Jesse's journey.* Simon is sucked down the bathtub drain, and emerges in a subterranean land inhabited by a race of horned rodents who have been confined underground for eons as the result of an earthquake. It is Simon's task to win a magic sword, confront a mysterious Beast, fight hordes of giant carnivorous insects, and lead the deserving rodents back up to the broad sunlit meadows of their ancient home. Despite the novel's rigorous eclecticism — similarities to *The Hobbit* are obvious, as in Simon's moment of sympathy for the Beast, "a trapped and lonely creature condemned to kill and eat" anyone it meets — its treatment of evil profits little from its models. Despite the possibilities inherent in confronting death in the dark, evil is not internalized as it is in Tolkien and Conrad. Simon undergoes no *anagnorisis;* the encounter with the Other does not turn into the encounter with the Self. (The author could well have pondered Ursula K. Le Guin's *A wizard of earthsea.*) In consequence, the novel offers the reader much action — sound and fury aplenty — but almost nothing in psychological depth.

Like *Simon Jesse's journey,* Judy Stubbs' *Terror of the cocoons* has the possibility of internalizing evil. The story is set at a time in the future when, having finally succeeded in rendering the earth's surface incapable of sustaining life, man and his noxious machines have been forced to seek shelter deep underground. Spaceships, each with a crew of teen-age cadets, are sent in search of new worlds to colonize. The quest for new worlds turns out to be a sham; the hopeful young cadets are drugged and then fattened in their protective cocoons before being turned into food for earth's population. Three of the cadets escape their cocoons, re-programme the computer directing the entire operation — and of course discover that the earth's surface is once more habitable. The novel does some interesting things with the struggle of the individual

against the group but, like *Simon Jesse's journey,* falls short in its presentation of evil. Cannibalism has been a stock menace of the adventure story at least since Defoe; but in this novel we are light-years away from Crusoe's terror, and incalculably remote from such real-life horror as that of the Donner party. Evil here is curiously. . . theoretical. No one can doubt that Gollum really means to eat Bilbo, but the encounter with evil in this novel is moderated through a computer. Evil is not individuated here, and so it is not internalized. Despite the novel's efforts at consciousness-raising — the cadet who really saves the day is a teen-age girl — the thought that she has been eating human flesh all her life scarcely flits across her consciousness. And so *Terror of the cocoons* does not fully exploit the possibilities it raises.

The one novel in this group which does do justice to its own potential — thanks in large measure to the skill with which it handles evil — is O.R. Melling's *The Druid's tune.* Rosemary and Jimmy are two twentieth-century teen-agers who travel backward in time to the age of the Irish kings. They join the army of the warrior-queen Maeve as she invades Ulster. Ulster's sole defender is the seventeen-year-old Cuculann, the legendary Hound of Ulster. The moral issues are complex, as Jimmy discovers when he meets Cuculann; and, despite the latter's reputation as "The warped one, A monster. . . They say he drinks the blood of his victims," Jimmy deserts Maeve's army "to join with a warrior of his own age — a friend who needed him." So Jimmy fights at Cuculann's side.

Cuculann is no sawdust hero, no stuffed knight of the nursery. He is presented sympathetically, and at times even as a comic figure; and he fully deserves Jimmy's admiration. But he is also terrible in his wrath: "in a blood-lust he didn't stop till he had killed everything before him." He almost kills Rosemary, and the children do see him kill his foster-brother.

Cuculann's ambiguity is brought home to the children when, seeking to save their lives, they ask help from a Druid. His magic is limited; they must fight, but they cannot be killed as long as they do not kill — and they can suffer the same wounds they give. He also utters a grim warning: "You will find it simpler to kill than not to. . ." Faced with this choice, the children understand Cuculann's moral struggle — and the choice between good and evil falls full upon them. Cuculann, hero and monster, is somebody anyone might become. Happily, they discover the power of sacrifice, and the interior resources to meet the challenges confronting them.

There is much to praise in this novel: its historical accuracy, its variety of tone, its deft social criticism, its complexity of characterization. But the best thing about it is the real potential for self-destructive evil which the children discover in themselves. Cuculann is simply Everyman writ large — and so the choice made by the children is both a real and a difficult one. Their victory is plausible, but it is not lightly won.

So its complex examination of evil is crucial to the success of *The Druid's tune;* and this in turn suggests that the treatment of evil is one criterion by

which fantasy may be judged. In *The undiscovered self* (1958), C.G. Jung gives a concise explanation of why this is so: "The evil that comes to light in man and that undoubtedly dwells within him is of gigantic proportions, so that for the Church to talk of original sin and to trace it back to Adam's relatively innocent slip-up with Eve is almost a euphemism. . . We are always, thanks to our human nature, potential criminals. . . None of us stands outside humanity's black collective shadow. . . a disposition that is always and everywhere present — and one would therefore do well to possess some 'imagination in evil,' for only the fool can permanently neglect the conditions of his own nature. In fact, this negligence is the best means of making him an instrument of evil." The best fantasy increases our "imagination in evil," and so increases our self-knowledge. Fantasy which fails to do so remains, at best, like the magical mirror of Galadriel, forever "dangerous as a guide to deeds."

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UNE BONNE ACQUISITION

La mer et le cèdre Ainsi vivaient les Indiens de la Côte du Nord-Ouest, Lois McConkey. Illus. Douglas Tait. Traduit par Danielle Thaler. Douglas & McIntyre, 1983. 31pp., 7,95$ broché. ISBN 0-88894-373-3.

La mer et le cèdre est un des livres de la collection *Ainsi vivaient les Indiens du Canada.* Les Indiens? Quelle image en avez-vous?

> On imagine généralement un homme, à l'allure noble, à la peau basanée; il est monté sur un poney et c'est une simple couverture qui lui sert de selle. On l'imagine aussi en train de chasser un troupeau de bisons. Ou bien encore à la tête d'une bande de braves se dirigeant vers un village de tentes appelées tepes. . . Ce livre veut te faire connaître les Indiens de la Côte du Nord-Ouest. Ceux-ci ne montaient pas à cheval, ils ne chassaient pas le bison et ils ne vivaient pas dans des tepees. (p. 3)

Ces Indiens ne sont pas des stéréotypes.

L'océan Pacifique et le cèdre avaient une grande influence sur la vie des Indiens de la Côte du Nord-Ouest. Les Indiens fabriquaient à peu près tout ce dont ils avaient besoin avec le cèdre: des boîtes, des paniers, des cordes, des cuillères, leurs maisons, leurs vêtements, et des mats totémiques.

Ce livre documentaire touche à neuf parties de la vie des Indiens: les pirogues, l'habitat, la nourriture, les vêtements, les outils, le potlatch, les croyan-