

hybride. On dirait que Côté, tenté à la fois par le roman d'aventures et par une réflexion sur les rapports possibles entre l'imaginaire et la réalité, n'a pas réussi à trouver la forme qui lui aurait permis de marier harmonieusement ses deux intérêts. Son roman est marqué, en son milieu, par une véritable solution de continuité entre, d'une part, l'intrigue somme toute assez convaincante de roman d'aventures élaboré dans les quatre premiers chapitres et, de l'autre, la discussion qui s'engage, à partir du moment où intervient, au chapitre cinq, le manuscrit inédit d'Henri Vernet, sur la possibilité d'un épanchement de l'imaginaire dans la réalité. Ce genre de discussion trouverait probablement mieux sa place dans un magazine de science-fiction qu'à l'intérieur d'une intrigue romanesque, où il risque de faire décrocher le lecteur, que les premiers chapitres pouvaient par ailleurs avoir aguiché.

La langue de Denis Côté, d'autre part, n'est pas toujours sûre. On relève, dans sa prose, de nombreuses faiblesses d'ordre grammatical, dont il faut espérer qu'elles n'induisent pas en erreur les adolescents qui conservent encore le souci d'écrire correctement.

En somme, une oeuvre d'une réussite discutable, mais qui aura peut-être l'avantage de renvoyer les jeunes lecteurs curieux aux rayons poussiéreux des bibliothèques pour y retrouver les romans d'Henri Vernes et la véritable série des Bob Morane. . .

Michel Gaulin est professeur titulaire de littérature française et canadienne-française à l'Université Carleton, à Ottawa.

GREY OWL: WILDERNESS MAN'S WORDS

Sajo and the Beaver People, Grey Owl. 1935, reprinted Macmillan, 1987. 183 pp. \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-7715-9271-X; **A book of Grey Owl**, Grey Owl. Ed. E.E. Reynolds. 1938, reprinted Macmillan, 1986. \$7.95 paper. ISBN 0-7715-96057.

Grey Owl shed his identity as Englishman Archie Belaney soon after he reached the Canadian wilds in the early 1900s and adopted the lifestyle of frontiersman and trapper. However, that lifestyle slowly evolved into one which was an anomaly of anomalies, a life of a **non-hunting** Indian living in the bush, as he came to respect and love those he called his brethren, the Little People of the Wilderness. Grey Owl discovered within himself

the ability to write passionately about his life and his brethren, and the ready market he found for his works and his lecture tours not only supported his family but enabled him to further his mission of preservation of the wild. His strong feelings for wild animals of the Canadian North are manifestly revealed in two recent reprints of his works, *Sajo and the beaver People* and *A book of Grey Owl*.

Originally titled *The adventures of Sajo and her Beaver People*, this book, first published in 1935, is the tale of two beaver kittens rescued by an Indian father who gives them to his two children, Sajo and Shapian. The four young creatures learn quickly to care for each other as the author erases the line separating human from animal, for the two beavers show the same kind of behavior their human friends do, and for the same reasons. Unfortunately, the father is forced to surrender one of the kittens to the local trader, and the two children, disconsolate at the loss, eventually decide to retrieve their zoo-bound little friend. They endure ordeals as they travel from their home in the Wilderness to the city; and city life presents a world as alien to them as the forest is to city dwellers. The lost kitten suffers as well, in his concrete and steel pen, with a concrete puddle-sized pool for a pond. Suffice it to say all five are reunited. But Grey Owl does not end the story at this obvious point; instead, after the celebrations are over, the father tells his children the baby beavers are old enough to return to where they belong. With a strong sense of loss, they take the two kittens back to the beaver pond.

The book is funny, sad, thought-provoking, and satisfying. It contains sketches done by Grey Owl that are a little fuzzy but still attractive. The story does verge on the sentimental in parts, but it does so much in the same way as the works of the British veterinarian and writer James Herriot do, for Grey Owl shares Herriot's style of affectionate description of his animals' acts and appearances. If Herriot inspires the reader to become a veterinarian, Grey Owl creates a longing to become an inhabitant of the Canadian wilderness.

That longing is not abated after reading *A book of Grey Owl*. Although not a cohesive story like *Sajo and the Beaver People*, it evokes the same response, with, however, an added note of wonder and awe. A selection of stories from Grey Owl's major works, it contains actual, if a little dark, photos of Grey Owl with some of his animal friends. It begins with exciting and moving excerpts from *Adventures of Sajo and her Beaver People* and continues with excerpts judiciously grouped from other works: *Men of the last frontier*, *Pilgrims of the wild*, and *Tales of an empty cabin*. Successive sections focus on the habits of beavers, the wilderness trail, wild animals

other than beavers, and on North American Indians. Each chapter is a coherent, integral unit, and there is no sense of abruptness or discontinuity in the flow of the stories except where the editor has noted unobtrusively the source of the excerpt. Grey Owl has written with the graceful ease suited to one so passionately intimate with his subject. His style matches his tales, as heroic deeds are told with heroic words, and serene scenes depicted smoothly and softly. In both books, his humor relies on understatement and a light irony that never descends to bitterness, and his messages of respect for the wilderness, the animals who inhabit it, and the men who survive in it, are only revealed in the telling of the tales, not in any didactic moral pronouncements. Hence both *A book of Grey Owl* and *Sajo and the Beaver People* are books that are more than worth reading for anyone, at any age.

Celeste A. van Vloten holds a diploma in animal health technology and a B.A. in English. She is currently working on her M.A. in children's literature at the University of Guelph.

PERDU DE VUE, RETROUVÉ DU CÔTÉ DU COEUR

La mitaine perdue, Ginette Anfousse. Collection Quand on joue. . . Montréal, Centre Educatif et Culturel / Ovale, 1987. 20 pp. 6,95\$ 9,95\$ broché, relié. ISBN 2-7617-0380-4, 2-89186070-5.

La principale règle du créateur d'albums pour enfants est de plaire et toucher mais pour ce faire, il doit ajuster son texte à l'âge et au niveau d'habileté à comprendre de sa jeune clientèle tout en s'assurant que ce même texte séduit l'imagination de l'adulte qui doit faire un choix éclairé quant à l'album qu'il propose à l'enfant et qui, en fin de compte, lira et relira l'album à voix haute à son jeune auditoire. Ginette Anfousse a su relever ce double défi avec doigté. *La Mitaine perdue* est un court album d'une qualité exceptionnelle qui, sans verser dans la mièvrerie ou le paternalisme, saura charmer l'enfant et l'adulte par la tendresse qui parcourt le texte et la gaieté naïve des illustrations.

L'histoire est à la fois simple et astucieuse. *Timothée Lafleur*, qui a perdu sa mitaine, craint d'être grondé et de se voir enlever son chat, mais à la suite d'un malentendu, on croyait *Timothée* disparu, les parents se ravisent et le père, malgré son horreur des bêtes, permet à son fils de garder *Tigris*. A l'écoute/lecture de ce quatrième album de la collection "Quand on s'amuse. . .", l'enfant (aspect pédagogique) aura l'occasion d'apprendre, tout en se divertissant, à vaincre ses réticences et à discuter ouvertement avec