

trop endormante [...] C'est vrai que je suis ignorante en la matière. Mais je n'ai pas une très grande envie d'apprendre ..." (44). Cette attitude, ces opinions plutôt irritantes colorent tout le récit; il est vrai qu'à la rigueur, elles peuvent être justifiées par le fait qu'elles reflètent cette "pose intellectuelle" d'indifférence qu'affectent les adolescents.

Mais ce qui nous a paru le plus insidieux et le plus inquiétant, c'est la description des jeunes néo-nazis tels Louis-Philippe Dumoulin et Hector. Ces jeunes qui expriment leur haine et leur intolérance à travers diverses actions tout au long du roman, sont présentés, en dernière analyse, non comme bourreaux mais comme victimes! Ils ont souffert, quelqu'un dans le passé leur a fait du mal et les a humiliés, et maintenant ils ne s'aiment pas eux-mêmes et se laissent manipuler par deux vieux monstres nazis, Monsieur Dupont et Monsieur Penel. En plus le "pauvre" Louis-Philippe Dumoulin se fait assassiner et devient ainsi victime à jamais. Quant à Hector, il semble se racheter en aidant Natasha dans son enquête. A travers cette description des personnages, Brouillet trivialisait le Mal. C'est peut-être ainsi qu'*Un rendez-vous troublant* devient plus troublant que le veut, nous le supposons, C. Brouillet.

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SUNSHINE IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Diana: My Autobiography. Kevin Major. Illus. Rick Ormond. Doubleday, 1993. 136 p., \$12.95 paper, ISBN 0-385-25413-X.

Kevin Major gives us a witty coming-of-age story, relentlessly funny, cleverly structured and loosely based on the Andrew Morton biography of the current Princess of Wales, *Diana: Her True Story*. Major's seventh novel parodies not only the structure of Morton's book, but also its tone and language to create a story which subtly explores the real and the imaginary in the life of its nearly twelve-year-old heroine. The hilariously skewed parallels between the two books subliminally suggest that "finding the real me" may be more age appropriate to Newfoundland Diana going-on-twelve than to the real Princess something-past-thirty.

Mr. Morton writes with this gravely disembodied voice, as though making soap-opera into scripture, but when Major's authoress, twelve-year-old Diana copies his royal once-removed tone to create her own studiously derivative autobiography, her resulting misperceptions create humour as densely packed as Henry James at his best. In fact, the day I read it, I had to take reading breaks to relax my cheek muscles from laughter-pucker. Major uses devices as varied as the unlikely use of cliché (35), the reversal of accustomed hopes to show the ridiculousness of the original (35), confusion in pronoun reference (36), ignominious events seen from an elevated view (5), misconstrued interpretation of

the adult world (21, 91), mis-used words (15), wonderfully inaccurate explanations of royal behaviour (32), subtle double references (36), misunderstanding of the British class system (54), double meanings (23), and incongruous similes (96), to name just a few.

Throughout, Major demonstrates unerring mastery in his craft, and fills his prose with active verbs, apt parallel constructions, seamless transitions from past tense back into present, and delightfully subtle alliteration. As a result, his Diana becomes far more than an up-date of the Anne of Green Gables type of female adolescent, preoccupied with romantic posturing and elevated language.

Major complicates his job, however, when he chooses to enter his own novel as a character, an issue which Mario Vargas Llosa examines illuminatingly in *A Writer's Reality* (1991, 110-113). Chapter One encompasses what usually passes for the Preface, in which Major sets himself up as the character of Diana's father who acts as second narrator as well as the real author of the book. While genuinely funny as Diana's exasperating parent, his fiction cannot manage the combination of author/father/narrator, and he intrudes upon his reader a retaliation to professional criticism of his work (104). This tar-baby approach to artistic differences mars an otherwise excellent book.

For one thing, his adolescent readers just don't care. While Major's narrator (the father) is ruefully aware of his daughter's self-interest and mines it for comic potential, Major in the conglomerate role forgets the consummate self-absorption of his intended audience, many of whom would be stopped cold by the first chapter. The scene where Diana's father, rather than her brother Jimmy, provides the solution to boyfriend Will's "problem" involving the Newfoundland dog and his own father also strains adolescent credulity. Nonetheless, when I tried the book out on an assortment of adolescent females at my disposal, the vote came out about evenly divided among thumbs up, thumbs up to the knuckle, and "silly"—a pretty high kid-rating!

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