NATURE, MAN AND THE YOUNG READER

by

Jane E. Miller

Candidate for the Master of Fine Arts in the College of Fine and Applied Arts of the Rochester Institute of Technology

Advisor

Mr. Norman Bate

May 25, 1966

Volume II
The great end of life is not knowledge, but action.

La fin profonde de la vie n’est pas la connaissance mais l’action.

T. H. HUXLEY
A child's instinct to learn comes from his wonderings, his curiosity. The more open his mind to wonder, the more sensitive he is to the satisfactions and enjoyments our earthly life affords.

Lillian Smith
DECISIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

The concept for the comparative study of natural forms to human constructions and its practical application in a children's book, was essentially motivated by my genuine interest in nature and its many forms. Through observation and teaching, I discovered that most children seem to be unaware of the relationship that exists between natural and man made objects. This provided me with further motivation for the project. In 1965, the book Bionics, was published for the adult public.

...to serve the very useful purpose of acquainting the reader with the diversity and complexity of the problems confronting the scientists and engineers who are attempting to lay the foundation for the design, development, and production of man-made devices based on biological principles.32

Although I found analogies concerning this subject in some children's books, they were isolated examples. Through my personal research I have not yet found a children's book devoted entirely to this theme. The need for a book of this type is more acute at the child's level while he still possesses an innate kinship with nature. This intense interest should be encouraged, developed, and extended to give the child another insight into observing nature as an essential factor in inspiring and fulfilling man's

aspirations.

The initial consideration concerning the project was to compile a list of related natural and man made forms. I selected 15 of these comparisons to illustrate, which is the norm for children's books written for the young reader (6 to 8 years). The age level at which my book is directed was predetermined for the 7 to 9 year old age group. A sequential development of these comparisons was necessary to produce a continuity. It seemed only natural that this development should begin with the water, progress to the land and "terminate" with the air.

Letters, explaining my project, were then sent to professionals in the children's book field. Attached to each letter was a questionnaire including six questions that I considered pertinent to developing my thesis. In many instances the authors-illustrators were in agreement in their responses to the questions. None of them used a limited vocabulary when planning the text and most did not employ a definite proportion of writing to illustration.

Some of the respondents felt that children vary to quite a degree within an age group, so that it is difficult to determine definitely whether children are concerned more with details. Marcia Brown feels as though it;

.....depends on the intensity of their interest in a subject.33

There was a wide range of devices used to capture and retain the young reader's interest.

Repetition of words or catch phrases helps hold interest as any chanting does. Startling words or sounds or action help. Drama always helps. 34

A definite emotional plot, action and simplicity in design comprised other criteria.

In one of my questions, I asked if it would be of more value to the child to have the book purely educational or to have a plot developed with the main character supporting the theme. Leonard Weisgard's responses made me aware of an error in semantics involving the word "educational", which resulted somewhat in a lack of communication.

Any good story told well can be educational. Do you mean purely educational to imply a factual book?35 Factual had been the intended word--not educational.

The general response to my letters was very favorable. Leonard Weisgard's and Marcia Brown's sincere interest in my project proved most encouraging.

In books concerned with illustrating and writing, I found the opinions of other authors were in accord with many of the beliefs stated in the returned questionnaires.

34. Weisgard, op. cit. (questionnaire)
35. Ibid.
The medium selected for the initial attempt, was cut paper. It was purposely chosen for its flexibility in arranging and its solid, flat color appeal. An actual size dummy (6" x 11") was rendered in charcoal pencil on newsprint paper and then executed in cut paper. Scraps of paper served as a stimulus in creating the "right" form and also new concepts. Planning should allow for the possibility of a spontaneous solution to a particular problem. Many original ideas are conceived in this manner. Constant references were made to adult and children's books, magazines, and sketches, in exploration of new ideas and for factual information.

Minute detail was avoided because of the inflexibility of paper in this respect. Emphasis was upon the simple massive shape. It might have been feasible at this stage to include another medium capable of producing the desired effects. As I previously stated in this thesis, a child should be approached simply and directly, but oversimplification will ultimately result in a prosaic work.

In each illustration, I endeavored to create an atmosphere distinctive to each scene, through the use of color. Warm colors convey the sensation of heat in the jungle scene. In direct contrast, shades of green visually describe an impression
of tranquility and coolness in the woodland setting. White was used repeatedly as a background to interrupt the flow of color. A color scheme was continued when more than two pages were related to the same idea. The blue behind the bridge is also the background for the spider, its analogy. The turtle and the armored vehicle scenes have many of the same colors, indicating a comparison. It therefore becomes obvious that the turtle, in the scene with the tank, is the same turtle as on the preceding page.

Repetition in patterns also established a continuity. The armadillo's armor and the shield of the knight have similar shapes connected by resembling shapes in the stone path. The exaggerated action of the horse interrupts this sameness. The boy on the seashore demonstrated further application of this principle. There is a recurrence of the spiral patterned shells in the water.

Humor was included in some of the illustrations. It is expressly evident in the illustration with the bird, turtle, and tiger in succession on top of the whale. Adults and children alike are attracted to the illustration for this reason.

The qualities which are basic in good writing are literary values; that is, they do not concern the subject matter so much as how it is presented. The subject matter of a book may be eminently sensible, and the presentation of it pre-eminently dull. In other cases, the subject matter may be nonsense, yet the presentation of it suggests profound truths.

36. Smith, op. cit., p. 35
These same qualities are basic in a creation of art.

After completing twelve of the fifteen cut paper illustrations, a presentation was made to the committee. It was suggested that the project be revamped. A major criticism shared by the committee was the lack of experimentation with the potentialities of this medium in producing a variety of effects. The concern here was not to have the effect for its own sake but rather how the effect could be applied to each individual idea. A successful example among the illustrations is the use of wax paper to simulate the dragon fly's wings and torn paper to resemble the texture of sand. One type of paper fused with two colors produced a convincing camouflage effect when torn. Combining other media with paper could have extended its possibilities further.

Another criticism concerned the perspective from which each scene was viewed. Each illustration was consistently envisioned from a profile and eye-level position. Different perspectives would have produced a liveliness and variety important to capturing and retaining the young child's interest.

The lack of activity in the illustrations was pointed out by the committee. A profound example of this is the woodland scene. This illustration might well be used as an advertisement for a sophisticated pine scented male cologne; its formality discourages
the child to enter within. Textured trees, growing things, and woodland creatures were recommended to capture and stimulate the child's interest. The same criticism applies to the Gothic church interior. Its beauty lies with its simplicity, not with its spirit. It is a study in oversimplification directed to the adult taste. In his literal approach to the picture book, the child expects the picture to relate a story and will accept an illustration on this basis.

In their general analysis of the project, the committee concluded that the illustrations would be more acceptable as twelve individual posters; lacking the continuity that is a prerequisite for a successful children's book.

My second approach to the project placed more emphasis upon the psychological, historical, educational, and technical aspects. A story board was composed in pencil and then completed in color. Final illustrations were done on an 18" x 24" Strathmore Alexis Drawing Pad No. 400-8. Each illustration was masked off and pastel; with its versatile chromatic scale, was selected for the medium. In the process of using pastels, it was found that a variety of effects and hues could be created. Its disadvantages are the tendency to smear when drawing and affixing and the fact that fixative darkens some colors. The cover and title page were
The principal idea and approach were retained in the final sketch, with the exception of the location of the grasshopper. He is placed in a lower position on the plant to avoid conflict with the title.
A variation in the shape and spacing of the whale's teeth provided a more interesting pattern. Yellow was applied more carefully to avoid the "muddy" appearance here. The anatomy of the fish was also improved.
PRELIMINARY SKETCH FOR SCENE WITH WHALE

Following the suggestion of my advisor, I repeated the fish from the first page and put them in the right hand corner. The wave that extends across the page has a more rhythmical movement in the final sketch.
The tactile quality of the elephant was diminished because it has needlessly become a focal point. The yellow background was softened. This gave the hunter more character. The tiger's head was enlarged to proportion it to the body.
PRELIMINARY SKETCH FOR THE DANDELION- PARACHUTE ANALOGY

For psychological reasons as stated in the thesis, the Negro boy was replaced by a Caucasian boy. It was difficult to determine that the boy was blowing in this sketch. It became more evident in the final sketch.
PRELIMINARY SKETCH FOR THE WOODLAND SCENE

A salmon pink butterfly replaced the grasshopper on the plant; thus providing needed warmth to that area. The grasshopper was still included, but as a camouflage element.
completed after the illustrations. A conscious effort was made in regard to the placement of the illustrations for the purpose of developing the theme. Space was reserved for the text either on each illustration or opposite the illustration. Children want and expect this. Every effort was made to give the book a beginning, a middle, and an ending and to make the child conscious of a theme developing throughout the book.

Certain aspects of a book are influenced by psychological factors. At present, there is an increased sensitivity among some minority racial groups regarding their public image. Some Negroes, for example, feel that the Caucasian has a tendency to exaggerate the Negroes' characteristics. In one of my illustrations I included a Negro boy. My advisor made me aware of the psychological problem inherent in this illustration. This was confirmed by a discussion with Mrs. Margurite Scott concerning a series of panels she was commissioned to do, portraying minority groups. She was advised to substitute more Caucasian-like features for Negroid, and to vary the skin tones among Negroes. Many text book companies are now concerned with this issue. For this reason I substituted a Caucasian boy in the Dandelion scene.

The inclusion of combative warfare equipment was also
avoided for psychological reasons. In the cut paper version of my project, the committee suggested that a non-warfare amphibian be substituted for the armored tank. The presence of the tank in a children's book would indicate to the child its sanction by the author or illustrator.

The object in writing a book of knowledge is to communicate knowledge one possesses. The author must have a thorough understanding of his subject matter; what the child wants to know, and the ability to simplify the subject matter. Because of the diversity of the subject matter in my book, extensive research was involved to compile information. A variety of books on each subject was consulted to insure authenticity. It was essential that I be selective about those ideas that would be included, not only in the text but also in the illustrations. The text was responsible for elucidating the illustrations, obtaining a cohesion with them, and for interpreting the theme of the books. The text was purposely limited to prevent losing sight of the main theme. Additional information on each subject could destroy the very intent of the book. By presenting the young reader with too many facts unrelated to the theme, his attention would become diverted from the theme. My concern here was with a book of knowledge, emphasizing the illustrations, and with a limited
text written purposely for the child. It should also be mentioned that unfamiliar words were included in the text. Most authors do not believe in confining vocabulary lists, primarily because this is the age level where children are acquiring new words with an anxiety that is insurmountable.

The beginning text of my book explains the theme briefly but distinctly. The closeness of the whale dramatizes the words; "All around you nature fills the world with living things." A technical aspect considered here was that whales with teeth only have them in their lower jaw. The upper jaw is a series of depressions that the teeth fit into. The small fish are repeated in a later scene. Children delight in seeing the same things over again.

The colors in the following scene were purposely subdued to give the sensation of the turtle under water. Horizontal movement of the pastel, combined with delicate white streaks, simulated the movement of water. This illustration was reworked several times to attain the desired effect. The shells were included primarily as part of the general theme and also to serve as a balancing factor. In the text, the word amphibian is not defined directly to avoid a too elementary approach.

Information about non-warfare amphibians was extremely
limited as were scenes showing vehicles entering the water. The white of the paper was utilized in producing the effect of splashing water. This was combined with a minimum amount of pastel. The men were included for technical and aesthetic reasons and the turtle to consolidate the amphibious relationship.

Descriptive words in the text assist in giving a greater height and depth to the bridge. A previous sketch displayed incorrect perspective since aerial perspective is difficult to attain. Corrective suggestions by my advisor resulted in the present illustration which creates the intended effect.

White was used as a background to the spiders for color relief and to emphasize the importance of the single line of silk. Action is presented by the text. "The spider usually attaches one end to a tall blade of grass--drops down--climbs up and fastens the other end to something high."

A change of pace in color is evident in the succeeding page. The knight, his shield, and the horse, comprise a compact unit. Attention is focused equally upon the lobster on the shield and on the knight, to emphasize the analogy. The horse's presence is obvious, but remains secondary to the theme. The tail of the horse and the knight's head are oriented in the direction of the text. The knight's plume and the horse's tail have a
physical relationship. The white in back of the knight augments the attention directed to that area. It also serves as a uniting element with the preceding page.

The shells used in a previous scene are the center of attraction in the next illustration. The absorption of the boy and the bird, further indicate the importance of these shells. The boy's right foot directs the line of vision to the action in the background and then proceeds to the opposite page where the building comparison is found. Pastel was applied lightly in broad strokes for the texture of the sand. There was difficulty in obtaining the suitable position for the boy in order to have him appear to be lying down.

The sweep of the wave and the curvature of the whale, in the following illustration, provide the surging action not found in the cut paper version. Background color was emitted through the whale to mollify the strength of a solid area of black. The little fish from the first scene have obviously escaped the whale's confines. It is also a device used to obtain a greater unity.

Varying hues of blue and green pastel were applied in overlapping layers to define a two dimensional depth in the submarine illustration. The black of the submarine was applied
in much the same way as for the whale and for the identical purpose. The cut paper illustration lacks depth and the sensation of the submarine descending.

The bright color in the next picture is in striking contrast to the desired obscurity of the preceding view. The yellow also conveys the sensation of heat. Meadow grass subtiley blends together to form the tiger; creating the camouflage effect. The tail leads to the text. The expression on the elephant and the position of the hunter's spy glass, insure the reader that the tiger is successfully camouflaged.

The woodland scene invites a child to enter. Underlying shades of blue, green and yellow, superimposed with browns, grays, and lavendars, give the illusion of depth. The plant at the wood's edge harbors a butterfly and a grasshopper (purposely hidden). The grasshopper continues the idea of camouflage and for this reason is mentioned in the text. The curious child will search for the grasshopper.

There was a degree of circumspection with which I approached the following illustration. In a preliminary sketch I used a Negro boy in place of the Caucasian. The sketch was excluded due to the psychological factors previously discussed. This was a personal decision. Most children like to identify themselves
with children illustrated in a book and it is believed, regardless of race, that children will identify with the boy portrayed here. The dandelion seeds provide motion and direction.

Somber colors were used to resemble dusk in the night scene. Using the suggestion of my advisor, I included the airplane to indicate that the obscure architecture in the background is an airport. The airplane is used to denote a similarity between itself and the bat in the use of directional devices in blind flying.

In the following illustration, the negative area of the paper was utilized to form a pond. It should be noted here that where water was a part of six illustrations, it retained those individual physical characteristics exclusive to each particular scene. The hawk's wings were reworked several times to indicate motion without flapping, and to make the hawk appear airborne. His right wing directs the line of vision to the text on the opposite page.

The final page of the book does not suggest finality. It shows that man will continue his exploration into space but will not forget his relationship to, nor his dependence on, nature.

After the completion of the illustrations, the idea for the cover and the title page was developed to conform to the theme
of the book. The title, Let's Look Again, recommended by my advisor, suggests further exploration. The grasshopper as a camouflage element, complements the meaning of the title.

It had been originally intended to print the title in red, repeating the small red areas on the cover. Because of the difficulty of obtaining red Letraset in the desired hue, black type was chosen for the title. The indistinct quality of the background provides depth.

The title page is a variation of the cover. The grasshopper and the lady bug are included on the same plant comprising a unit.

Manual binding of the book completed the project. For the end papers, a lighter weight paper would have been more satisfactory. The heavier paper, selected because of its color, tended to make alignment of the pages and the cover more difficult.

It is hoped that the child will be motivated by this book to discover further examples of existing relationships. There is a tendency among children and adults to observe the aesthetic qualities of natural forms. It is the scientist who explores the meaning and reason for their existence as an essential and ultimate source of form from which man derives many ideas. A child must be made aware of this relationship through teaching devices.
A Brief Critical Analysis and Suggested Improvements:

1. Cover.

In the original sketch, the plant had a more rhythmical quality. The plant on the back cover in the preliminary sketch disappeared effectively off the edge of the cover.

2. Title page.

The slight evidence of a skeletal motif on some of the leaves would have created a more tactile sensation characteristic to leaves.

3. First page--whale.

Variations in the color and pattern of the little fish would have imparted more interest to that area, without detracting from the general concept.


A more subtle design could have replaced the geometric forms on the turtle's shell. It was difficult selecting a color suitable to the fish that would help retain his identity without his becoming a focal point.

5. Third page--amphibian.

There is a limitation concerning the color used for any Army conveyance. These colors surrounding the amphibian are conservative so as not to compete with the principal idea. The equal intensity of of colors inclines towards the monotonous.

6. Fourth page--suspension bridge.

More traffic on the bridge might introduce another interesting pattern.
7. **Fifth page--spider.**

The spiders have an inanimate appearance alien to their nature. Further stylization of the spiders could have incorporated more humor.

8. **Sixth page--knight and lobster.**

Erasure marks successfully simulated polished armor. However, the knight's form could have been humorously exaggerated without losing the original intent. His eyes might have been peering out through a small aperture in the head piece.

9. **Seventh page--shells.**

The shell type building should have been placed lower on the page. Adjustments would then have to be made with the proportion and placement of those figures in the background. A greater variety of shells would stimulate a child's interest further.

10. **Eighth page--whale.**

Teeth might have been shown in the whale's jaw to reinforce his identification with the whale on the first page.

11. **Ninth page--submarine.**

The submarine could have resembled a whale form even more. Inclusion of seaweed and sea creatures might display more of an illusion of depth.

12. **Tenth page--camouflage.**

More equipment included with the hunter and the elephant could provide interesting, but not detracting details.

13. **Eleventh page--woodland scene.**

Increased animation could have been created by an addition of plants and woodland inhabitants.

Too much negative space could be resolved by the addition of details relating to the theme.

15. Thirteenth page--bat.

There is a necessity for more white on the right hand page to compensate for dark somber colors used behind the bat.

16. Fourteenth page--hawk over pond.

An aerial view displaying a patterned landscape would interrupt the monotonous effect produced by an accumulation of negative white areas at the end of the book.

17. Final page--the universe.

The last page would have been more effective if it had been preceded by more positive areas of color.
A criterion for evaluating the books qualities:

1. How appropriate is the size of the book for this age level?
   Children's preferences naturally vary. My book is designed for the individual that would be attracted to this size.

2. Is the length of the book suitable to this age level?
   The standard size is 32 pages which I conformed to. This seemed to be an adequate amount necessary to retain a child's interest.

3. Does a beginning, middle, and end exist?
   I was very conscious of developing the text and illustrations with this in mind as a major guide. The first illustration is a dramatic one and the succeeding ones create excitement to retain the child's interest. The final illustration restates the theme and confirms it.

4. Is the theme explicit?
   I attempted to explain the theme in a simple direct manner on the first page of the book. The purpose here is to stimulate the curiosity of the child.

5. Is the text cohesive with the illustrations?
   The text is used to fill the voids of understanding left by the illustrations and hence becomes an integral part of the illustrations.

6. Is there a variety of ideas?
   A variety of ideas seem to exist more in the middle of the book. Some of the beginning pages are too alike in color as are the ending pages in design.

7. Have a variety of moods been created?
   Each illustration has its own individual atmosphere. Some illustrations are much more successful than others in this respect.
8. Does a moral exist and if so, is it explicit?

I felt it necessary to include a moral to reinforce the theme of the book. It is hoped that the child will either determine what the moral is, or be aware that there is one.

The rather extensive research into the history and technical aspects of children's books proved to be very valuable in formulating the approach and in making the many necessary decisions. Hopefully this information will benefit future researchers in the field.

In the process of creating any new idea, it is difficult for the artist to remain objective. It is particularly difficult when the creation is directed toward a child. The artist must constantly concern himself with being able to visualize his work through the mind of the child. The ultimate success of the creation rests with the child.
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APPENDIXES
Dear 

I am a graduate student at Rochester Institute of Technology majoring in the field of Graphics Design. I am writing this letter to you to ask if you would give me some assistance based on your experience in the origination of children's books.

For my Master's thesis, my project will be the creation of a children's book examining the relationship of man-made objects to forms found in nature. This book, directed toward the elementary level, age group 7 to 9 years, will attempt to develop the child's natural curiosity about nature and its relationship with himself.

I should appreciate it very much if you would answer the few questions on the attached page. Your responses to these questions will be of great assistance to me not only in the preparation of my thesis, but in my own understanding of the art of writing children's books.

Thanking you for your kind consideration, I am

Very truly yours,

Jane E. Miller
1. Do you make use of a vocabulary list for the various age levels?

2. Are children more concerned with generalities than with details at the 7 to 9 year age level?

3. What is your estimate, approximately, of the desired proportion of writing to illustrations?

4. What devices do you use to capture and retain the young reader's interest?

5. Would it be of more value to the child to have the book purely educational or to have a plot developed with the main character supporting the theme?

6. I should appreciate any additional comments you might wish to make.
1. Do you make use of a vocabulary list for the various age levels?
   No. As far as I am able, I try to write simply and clearly. I do not believe that vocabulary lists should be used in the type of books I do.

2. Are children more concerned with generalities than with details at the 7 to 9 year age level?
   I think this is hard to say, and depends on the intensity of their interest in a subject. Concrete details make for more life.

3. What is your estimate, approximately, of the desired proportion of writing to illustrations?
   This varies greatly, according to the material. Some picture books need almost no text, the story being carried by the pictures. Some are picture-story books, with much more text. I think you have to feel out each book and its problems individually. None of this type of material can be reduced to formula, without killing the life of your book.

4. What devices do you use to capture and retain the young reader's interest?
   My own intensity of interest will be such, I hope, that I shall be able to transmit some of it to my writing and pictures.

5. Would it be of more value to the child to have the book purely educational or to have a plot developed with the main character supporting the theme?
   This would depend again on how you wish to treat your material. Each type of book has its own place. If the aim of the book is to present information, it should do that, as interestingly as possible. If the aim is to tell a story, with character development, action, etc., that would be the approach.

6. I should appreciate any additional comments you might wish to make.
   I'll write these in my letter to you.

Ms. Marcia Brown
Miss Jane E. Miller

Dear Miss Miller:

Thank you for your letter of July 9th, in which you tell me of your very interesting project for your Master's thesis. I think it could make a fascinating book for children.

I am afraid that my answers to your questions are not going to help you much, because they represent a point of view toward working for children that I do not believe in. I feel that books come out of your own deep involvement with your idea and material and your desire to share it with children. Of course, if you are writing for young children, you will write clearly and simply, but you also want to stretch their minds with new words, enlarge what they already bring to the book. Vocabularized lists are apt to kill writing, except in the hands of a very few experts like Dr. Seuss.

If I were you, rather than depend on such scraps of information or experience that authors can give you, I would suggest you go to a large collection of children's books, probably the best being in the main children's room of your public library. Look at all the books possible that treat such information as opening children's eyes to what is around them. There have been many. Also, look at good picture books to see how authors and artists have treated informational material. A frame for an informational book can become very awkward unless well handled and is apt to get in the child's way. He is quite sure that it is an informational book, and needs no disguising of the fact. Even some books for older children and adults might give you some ideas. I have a marvelous book of German photographs of plant forms, that suggest Spanish wrought iron work, etc. It is hard to tell which idea came first. This might help you to clarify your own approach to your material. I would not worry at all about levels, or devices. If your interest is great enough, it will come out and certainly will need nothing so artificial as a device. Your own imagination and spirit will make your book. Devices are for those who lack both. If your book is vivid enough of course it will have educational value and will also have the value of opening a child's eyes. Your subject is excellent, and the possibilities of the material are endless. Some of what you choose to include will be from his own world; some will lead him on to associations he will only understand fully later on.

How will you illustrate your ideas? I don't know if any of this helps you or not. But I send my best wishes to you. You have the idea for a lovely book. If anything comes of it in the way of publication, please let me know so that I can look it up.

Sincerely,

Marcia Brown
1. Do you make use of a vocabulary list for the various age levels?
   
   No

2. Are children more concerned with generalities than with details at the 7 to 9 year age level?
   
   Details

3. What is your estimate, approximately, of the desired proportion of writing to illustrations?
   
   ONE-HALF IN 32 PP. PICTURE-BOOK AGE 4-8
   ONE-THIRD IN 64 PP. " " " 8-12

4. What devices do you use to capture and retain the young reader's interest?
   
   A STORY WITH A BEGINNING, A MIDDLE, AND AN END
   WITH A DEFINITE PLOT.

5. Would it be of more value to the child to have the book purely educational or to have a plot developed with the main character supporting the theme?
   
   IF IT IS EDUCATIONAL, CONCEAL IT IN A PLOT.
   WHO WANTS EDUCATION?

6. I should appreciate any additional comments you might wish to make.
   
   THE BEST WAY TO WRITE A STORY IS TO WRITE ONE IN WHICH YOU ENJOY YOURSELF. DO NOT WRITE DOWN TO CHILDREN.

Evaline Ness

Ms. Evaline Ness
1. Do you make use of a vocabulary list for the various age levels?
   No. Our little girl, six, likes all sorts of words, long and short, easy and hard. We think the vogue for planned vocabulary will be short lived.

2. Are children more concerned with generalities than with details at the 7 to 9 year age level?
   Children are all different, and it is impossible to define what will appeal to them. We try not to draw down to them and what it is good for.

3. What is your estimate, approximately, of the desired proportion of writing to illustrations?
   There is no set rule. Critics are complaining of late of the picture book with a few lines of text. But it is really a matter of what you want to say, and finding the best way to say it.

4. What devices do you use to capture and retain the young reader's interest?
   We have only one, to make drawings that interest and excite us. If you have a feeling for children's book illustration, you must follow that instinct.

5. Would it be of more value to the child to have the book purely educational or to have a plot developed with the main character supporting the theme?
   Either method has it's place. It all depends on how well it is done.

6. I should appreciate any additional comments you might wish to make.
   As you can see, we have no formulas for illustration. But one might suggest a few rules of thumb:
   Don't condescend to the child. Make drawings to the very best of your ability. There are many wonderful children's books, all different. They speak to different children... but I think all the good ones are authentic, that is, direct, free of effects done for their own sake, and done by the writer and artist for the child in himself.

Mr. & Mrs. M. Provense
1. Do you make use of a vocabulary list for the various age levels?

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6. I should appreciate any additional comments you might wish to make.

The books I usually like are ones which often win the prize such as "The Prince," "Rain Maker Appearance," and "The War."
purchase them. I talked to a
salesman and he said the selection of the Best
Children's Book did not base its necessarily
appeal to children, that the award was
made for its artistic merit.
One which had both appeal to chil-
dren was Maurice Sendak's
"When the Wild Beasts Are"
Look at these three if you'll understand
my comments better.
I wish you all kinds of
success in writing your theses
and hope this is some little help
1. Do you make use of a vocabulary list for the various age levels?

   Definitely NOT. I do not approve of limited vocabularies.

2. Are children more concerned with generalities than with details at the 7 to 9 year age level?

   Children themselves vary so within age groups I find this difficult to generalize about. It has been suggested that very young children love small detail and that this does change as they grow older, but many fine old poets also love and use small detail.

3. What is your estimate, approximately, of the desired proportion of writing to illustrations?

   A picture book is necessarily a story with a predominance of pictures, but I cannot say half and half, for it depends upon the necessary length a good story requires and how much type area a particular story demands relative to good design.

4. What devices do you use to capture and retain the young reader's interest?

   If by young reader you mean an age up to seven, repetition of words or catch phrase helps hold interest as any chanting does. Startling words or sounds or action help. Drama always helps. Contrast helps an upset or a reversal of an established cliche, too.

5. Would it be of more value to the child to have the book purely educational or to have a plot developed with the main character supporting the theme?

   Any good story told well can be educational. Do you mean purely educational to imply a factual book?

6. I should appreciate any additional comments you might wish to make.

   I do not mean to imply that your questions are unanswerable, but writing for children is not unlike writing for anyone and all the rules can be broken when you are doing the job well. If you have something to say, and you say it succinctly, imaginatively in an un hackneyed way you may succeed. Beatrix Potter did.

   Mr. Leonard Weisgard.
Dear Jane Miller;

Your proposed thesis sounds most exciting. You should find great excitement in some of the earlier cultures where natural forms were so wonderfully involved in art and architecture and design. The extraordinary play between symbol and meaning is an area that is beyond juvenile comprehension but nevertheless fascinating, especially as it affects the unconscious and later is reflected in dream interpretation. The sheer impudence and strength of primitive impulse is another area where honesty of seen detail so coincides with small people's reactions to things.

Generalizing about writing or illustrating distresses me so do please forgive me for not seeming to answer your questions as they deserve to be answered.

The best of luck and great success to you with your project.

Very sincerely,

Leonard Weisgard
All the ordinary yardsticks which measure the quality of art are worse than useless when applied to Ludwig Bemelmans and his paintings. Every so often an artist of this kind comes along—a man whose lack of academic talent is so far offset by the charm and verve of his work that the critic has to invent new standards in order to begin to criticize. There’s no hidden meaning, no nebulous or enigmatic title to explain what might otherwise remain aimless daubing. There is little of anatomic correctness to his people; his buildings would undoubtedly collapse if unseen carpenters weren’t frantically scurrying around behind them, nailing away like mad. But they enjoy one virtue: they are sheer delight to behold. And, like the art of James Thurber, (another writer of tales for children whose art was incidental music to accompany the words) these Bemelmans caseins will continue to captivate viewers. They were recently seen on exhibition at Manhattan’s fashionable Hammer Galleries and are illustrations from Mr. Bemelman’s book: “Madeline in London,” published by Viking Press. They are well worth studying. They have an odd ability to inspire artists of every age.
EES IT

For Pepito's Birthday

18 1/4 x 22 3/4

Changing of the Guard

40 x 27

Careful, Girls, Watch Your Feet

26 x 38 1/2
Bemelmans works in just about any medium that suits his fancy, including casein, oil, watercolor and an occasional collage pasteup for backgrounds or objects. Work done for book illustrations is usually at least half-up to twice size of actual reproduction.

Everyone Had Been Well Fed

Deline in London (cover of Holiday, August 1961)
John Tenniel and Howard Pyle

PIONEERS IN CHILDREN’S BOOKS

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland.

It is almost impossible to think of “Alice in Wonderland” without the art of Sir John Tenniel leaping freshly into mind. Many artists have illustrated editions of “Alice in Wonderland” over the past ninety years, but John Tenniel is remembered. He was the first and for most readers, the only.

Of all the books of the century, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, published in 1866, and Through the Looking-Glass, published in 1872, stand out as perfect examples of author and artist being as one. Alice’s birthday might almost be said to have been the April day in 1864 when Tenniel agreed to make the pictures for the book.

If we may judge from their correspondence, Mr. Dodgson (or Lewis Carroll, as we like better to call him) was no easy one to suit. “No detail was too small for his exact criticism. ‘Don’t give Alice so much crinoline,’ he would write, or ‘the White Knight must not have whiskers; he must not be made to look old,’ ” etc. It worried him a bit because Tenniel never used a model—“vows he no more needs one than I should need a multiplication table to work out a mathematical problem.”

On the other hand, he omitted a whole chapter from Through the Looking-Glass at Tenniel’s suggestion. Originally the book was to have thirteen chapters, but the last one was not quite good enough and was finally left out. Besides it contained a wasp in a wig and at that Tenniel balked: “a wasp in a wig is altogether beyond the appliance of art.”

“These pictures,” says Cosmo Monkhouse in the A.Journal for 1901, “combine the merits of two kinds of illustrations: they are as faithful as possible to the text, at the same time are fresh expressions of an individual artistic genius. They are divided from his other illustrations and from nearly all those of other men by their exquisite gentle, and ingenious humor.” And he goes on to say, “Fortunately there are few who do not love Alice and have an intimate acquaintance with the White Rabbit, the March Hare, the White Queen and the rest of that delightful bewildering company met by Alice in her adventures. Tenniel has drawn them for us so that we could not believe them one little bit if they were redrawn by anyone else. He has drawn for us Wonderland itself, and above all, Alice: that perfect ideal of an English girl; innocent, brave, kind and full of faith and spirit. Even her face as drawn by Tenniel has a sweet look of wonder and expectation but new of confusion or fear, whether she finds herself swimming with a mouse or playing croquet with a flamingo for a mallet.”

Wise man, Sir John Tenniel: for all the success of Alice he resolutely refused to illustrate another book for children once the spontaneous impulse to draw for them had passed. “It is a curious fact,” he wrote to Lewis Carroll some years later, “that with Through the Looking-Glass the faculty of drawing for book illustration departed from me, and notwithstanding all sorts of tempting inducements, I have done nothing in that line since.”

Almost seventy years ago, back in 1877, many American children going through their latest copies of St. Nicholas discovered some unpretentious little fables with illustrative quite different from those to which they were accustomed. These drawings had a simplicity, a strong, almost heroic line, a quaint, kindly humor quite rare in those days where soft insipidity was considered the only proper fare for children. They were signed with a modest “H.P.”

None of these children could know then that thirty years later, when they had reached middle age, they would still be enjoying fresh illustrations by the same artist whose initials, by that time, would be one of the most honored signatures in all American illustration. Although they were doubtless pleased by the pictures themselves, t
Illustration

could not realize that they were sharing an historic moment, for these small efforts marked the beginning of a remarkable career and a glorious era.

Howard Pyle was to become more than a great illustrator; he was to become an American institution. He was to stand as a symbol of all that is fine and honest and good in the art of illustration. He was a one-man movement which would exert an incalculable influence on the whole course of illustration in this country.

He has been dead for thirty-five years now, but his spirit shines in much of the best illustration of today, not only in the work of his pupils and their pupils, but in the work of all those who have felt and admired (and who has not?) his high integrity of purpose, his tremendous knowledge and skill. No illustrator worthy of the name can look on the work of Howard Pyle and then do careless or insincere work himself without feeling a sense of personal reproach, a sense of shame that he has failed this good and honest master. His presence is in every decent studio; inspiring, encouraging, helpful, corrective or justly wrathful.

Illustration in America in 1877 was most uneven and not of a very high standard. As for children's illustrators, as we think of them now, there were practically none. The better children's books were largely foreign importations, principally English. Here we produced a few crudely embellished readers and Mother Goose for the very young, and for those a little older an assortment of sickeningly

Though "Alice" was one of the most popular books Tenniel ever illustrated, he did almost nothing else in the children's field after its sequel, "Through The Looking Glass." But his fame as an illustrator largely rests upon these two lovely books.

Tenniel's instructions to the engraver who had to translate his line drawings onto wood or metal for printing was usually explicit. He was a perfectionist, usually dissatisfied with every end result.
moral or saccharine tomes designed to uplift and edify. These were mere reflections of the grown-up tastes in a day when a willow weeping over a tombstone was the universal theme of art and literature. A day when children, through books, were exhorted to revere their parents as the godheads of all wisdom and justice; were taught that pain, tribulation, repentance and an early but lingering death from a "wasting disease" were the normal lot of the young. Poets in art, especially birds, were born only to die and afford "toucing" and "elegant" subjects for the artists' brushes. The beauties of nature existed, apparently, merely to illustrate how soon the leaf withers and the brightest flower fades.

It is small wonder that the clean-cut, healthy, joyous work of Howard Pyle came to the children of the late seventies like a fresh breeze flooding a fetid sickroom.

Here was "Picturesque Europe" indeed, but how different! Here were castles, not moss-hung but lived in, spacious, clean; deep-embrasured millioned windows, massive furniture, rich hangings, moats and drawbridges. Here were towers, not buried in ivy and water moonlight, but soaring breathlessly into clear and sparkling skies; battered shoot balconies and belfries, tiled roofs where pigeons strutted joyfully in the sun.

Here stone-paved courtyards were clean swept, filled with activity. Dogs rollicked, scullions chatted, men-at-arms furnished their weapons. In the surrounding gardens, straw beehives stood in orderly rows beneath stout thatched shelters. Trees were all about—and such trees! No dreamy weeping willows these, nor moss-hung churchyard relics. These trees were vigorous, alive, clad in clean-cut leaves, gay with blossoms or laden with luxuriant apples or pears.

The villages too were quaint and picturesque, but awash with the gloomy picturesqueness of mold and decay. The crooked tile roofs glittered in the sun. Gay curtains in blossoming plants brightened the windows, smoke rose from the chimneys, people bustled in the streets. You could pick out the house you'd like to live in, not die in (at an earl's age). And always on the hill near the village were the whitewashed towers and walls of the great castle, smiling down protectingly.

In this cheery country were no ribboned pug dogs or fat, overstufféd ponies ("Riding the Pony"), nor decease canaries ("The Dead Bird"). Here were massive, spirit war horses, smart, grinning foxes, mischievous jackdaws. Here gay hares skipped nimbly out of harm's way, birds sang and swirled about the belfries.

And the people! Here were no sanctimonious little pious with their "wasting diseases"; these were stout, jolly, healthy people. The heroes were handsome muscular princes or clever peasant lads; their heroines golden-haired princesses or well-fed goosegirls. Kings and Queens were in man—querulous, futile, or impressively regal. Gorgeous caparisoned knights battled in flower-spangled meadows.

Stiles there were aplenty, but never draped with dream lovers; on these stiles minstrels sang gay roundelay days, gossips conversed with rabbits or foxes. Even the Devil appeared frequently, but not as that amorphous threatening menace that blighted the lives and reason of so many Victorian children. This Devil was a dapper, handsomely beribboned gentleman, clever and unscrupulous yes, but gas outwitted and frustrated by the still cleverer plout hero or his good wife. And the jolly, earthy Men of God—priests, abbot's, friars and saints! Stout, jolly, bearded lords, as handy with staff or cudgel as with the ale un ready to drub a villain or perform a miracle with equal g humor. How different from the thin-whiskered, pasty p yeniors of gloom, vengeance, repentance and the-wrath come to whom children were accustomed both in real and in their literature.

No wonder that this land and these people of How
Pyle's seemed like a childhood vision of the Promised Land come true. Small wonder that children welcomed him with joyous hearts and, as they grew and developed, followed with loving interest the growth and development of his remarkable talent.

Almost simultaneously with the advent of Howard Pyle there came, for some reason, a sudden upsurge in our illustration; a new vigor, a healthy exuberance, truly American. The day of the graveyard, the parting lovers and the withering flower was done. In its stead burst out the new and living art of a more honest generation.

The latter years of the past century and the opening years of this were the Golden Age of American illustration, and of all the many who contributed to its glory Howard Pyle towers like a great oak over the fine but lesser trees of a rich forest.