

# Lehman\_1\_2\_Evaluating\_Childrens\_Literature

KATRINA LEHMAN

LSC 5505 CORE RESOURCES, PROF. JANE P. FENN

## *Assignment 1.2 5505*

### **A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books “Genesis of the English Language Picture Book”**

Lima, Carolyn W. and John A. Forward. A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books. 5th. New Providence, New Jersey: R.R. Bowker, 1998.

### **From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books**

Horning, Kathleen T.. From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997.

### **The Big Snow**

Hader, Berta and Elmer. The Big Snow. Berta and Elmer Hader, ill. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1948.

- Although a bit larger in size, this book is reminiscent of the children’s classic “Peter Rabbit” by Beatrix Potter. Unlike Potter’s illustrations, however, these illustrations/sketches of the natural world are realistic, rather than whimsical, portrayals of birds and animals in a winter setting.
- The illustrations in this book demonstrate unsuccessful preparation of colors for offset printing. The colors are visually unappealing and gray due to inaccurate mixing of colors. We must not be overly critical of these early illustrators, however. An exceptional visual accuracy was needed in these early years of picture book illustration when artists lacked the technological advances that we enjoy today.

### **Frog Went A-Courtin’**

Langstaff, John. Frog Went A-Courtin’. Feodor Rojankovsky, ill. Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955.

- This picture book, like “The Tortoise and the Hare” of Aesop’s Fables, places animals in human situations. For example, Frog goes courting with a “Sword and pistol by his side... His boots they shone as black as jet” (Langstaff).
- Rojankovsky is successful in his color mixing.. These illustrations are much more complex than many of the book’s predecessors because of its expansive color range. The color mixing “works” in this book, creating crisp, clear delineations between the colors and avoiding the “washed out” look found in The Big Snow published less than a decade earlier.

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### **Baboushka and the Three Kings**

Robbins, Ruth. Baboushka and the Three Kings. Nicolas Sidjakov, ill. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960.

- Like John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress", Baboushka and the Three Kings uses religious themes to create a unique parable/tale. The font used is reminiscent of the days when moveable type was in its beginning stages and paragraph division is signified by asterisks.
- The use of simple, primary colors is evident in this picture book. Rather than mixing colors, the illustrations are composed of pure, primary colors: red, yellow, blue, and an occasional green.

### **Ashanti to Zulu**

Musgrove, Margaret. Ashanti to Zulu. Leo and Diane Dillon, ill. New York: The Dial Press, 1976.

- Leo and Diane Dillon pay great attention to historical detail. Like Walter Crane's insistence that "text and illustration should be in harmony, forming a complete unit"(Lima xviii), the Dillon's use of a design at the edges of each frame "is based on the Kano Knot, which symbolizes endless searching—a design originally used in . . . northern Nigeria" (Musgrove).
- The fact that this book was published in 1976, before the great advances in print technology, is astounding. The illustrations in this book show a complexity in color mixing, and the Dillons are successful in creating visual unity by using earth tones and a complex range of hues.

### **Shadow**

Cendrars, Blaise. Shadow. (Trans. Marcia Brown). Marcia Brown, ill. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1982.

- Shadow, published by Aladdin Paperbacks (an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division), is an example of a book published by a children's publishing division of a major publishing company. This practice began in the "Golden Thirties" when "many publishers had set up separate editing departments expressly for the purpose of publishing children's materials" (Lima xx).
- The rich, saturated colors, visual contrast, and the multi-layered, mixed media in this book demonstrate the "coming of age" of print media. I imagine the illustrations in this book were scanned, a method that would have been impossible a decade earlier.

### **Golem**

Wisniewski, David. Golem. David Wisniewski, ill. New York: Clarion Books, 1996.

- Golem is an old tale based on a 400-year-old Jewish legend, much like the tales of the Brothers Grimm (Wilhelm and Jacob), who gathered and refined European folktales during the 1800's.

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- Photographer Lee Salsbery photographed these three-dimensional, paper-cut illustrations. The advances in printmaking such as “high speed presses, computer technology, and scanning devices” (Horning 89) allowed the printers to add visual depth by accentuating shadows.

### **The Man Who Walked between the Towers**

Gerstein, Mordicai. The Man Who Walked between the Towers. Mordicai Gerstein, ill. Brookfield: Roaring Book Press, 2003.

- The beauty of The Man Who Walked between the Towers is that it celebrates the artistic expression of street performer Philippe Petit who breaks the law in order to create a public performance. This book is a notable move away from the early didacticism of children’s books where books were “intended for instruction and indoctrination in the principles of moral ... behavior” (Hiirlimann, Three Centuries of Children’s Books in Europe as qtd. in Lima xvi).
- Like Wanda Gag in Millions of Cats who used “varied page layouts, and illustrations that break out of their frames to extend across... pages” (Horning 88), Gerstein includes several fold-out pages that fan out into three sections, with the illustration extending to fill a three-page spread.