

MILLERS FALLS  
ESSAY  
CONTENT

AN ORIGINAL PICTURE BOOK FOR CHILDREN

by  
*Ivey*  
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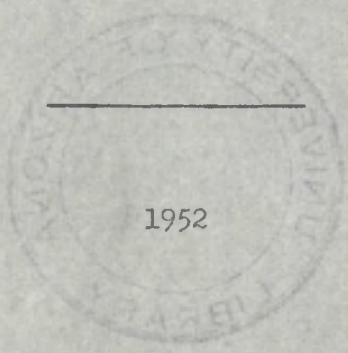
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## INTRODUCTION

## Statement of Thesis problem:

Through research, study and experience, to learn the problems involved in the preparation of a completely illustrated picture book for children of the primary age level. The problems, including techniques, materials, and knowledge of the child's needs, solved to the point of meeting actual publication requirements.

## Thesis:

A Picture Book for Children.

Before going into the details of the solving of my Thesis problem, I will give a short biographical sketch of my Art education and experience which led to the selection of this particular work.

I was very fortunate during my early schooling, in having teachers who took a particular interest in my art work and encouraged and helped me a great deal. My four years of Art in high school gave me an unusually sound basis in drawing and design, which possibly made up for certain deficiencies in college. Having attended a Liberal Arts college, Carleton, Northfield, Minnesota, for four years, the very minimum number of Art courses was required for a major in that subject, the emphasis there being not on specialization, but a general knowledge in all fields. However, the courses received there were

invaluable: drawing, sculpture, design, oil painting, and several classes in Art History. I became interested at this time in illustration of some kind, preferably for children, because it seems that women have been more successful in this field than other commercial art fields, possibly due to a greater insight into the mind of the child. I felt however that my technical training was insufficient for this type of work. Upon graduation, I secured a position teaching Art in Junior and Senior High School in Spooner, Wisconsin, where I remained for two years. I felt that this work with children would be helpful in the work that I would like to do someday, children's illustration. It also enabled me to do the work on a Master of Arts in Art degree this year. Aside from the classes required for an advanced degree at the University of Arizona, I have attended a night extension class in the Illustration of Children's Books, taught by Ann Meriman Peck, a well known illustrator of children's books. This experience, especially involving technical problems was a great help in the working out of my thesis. With the information I have accumulated on the subject, through this course, with research, and practical experience in putting together a book of this kind, along with making a few sample acetate plates for color reproduction, I may be able to do this kind of Art work, as an avocation if nothing else.

## THE ORIGINAL WORK

The subject that I chose to illustrate, was taken from a portion of the well known Dr. Doolittle series, one in which Dr. Doolittle is confronted with financial problems which can be alleviated by his bringing back to America the rarest animal of all, the Pushme-pullyu, a shy and comical animal so named because of two heads, one at each end. Dr. Doolittle's friends, the monkeys of the jungle, search for and capture the animal. The good Doctor, being of a kindly nature, does not wish to take the animal from his home and is persuaded only when the Pushme-pullyu, wishing to help the good Doctor, consents to go. There is a farewell feast in honor of the Doctor and his new friend and the two sail away to America, making the traditional happy ending. I found in the character of the Pushme-pullyu and the other personified animals in the story, the unlimited possibilities for use of the imagination. The child lives in his imagination a great deal, and the more fantastic the story is, the more it appeals to him. Before choosing the subject it was necessary to know what subjects were the most appealing to children of the age group for which I was creating the book. Through actual tests and research on the subject, it is known that from the age of approximately four to eight children are primarily interested in jingles, picture books, simple fairy tales and in the talking animal type of story. In selecting the story which I did, I was meeting this most

important requirement. The story itself is purely in the realm of nonsense and fantasy; however, as soon as the story is laid in some far off land, or in once-upon-a-time days, anything is possible and therefore probable. Whatever is created by the artist must be plausible, something a child can believe, something within the realm of possibility under the circumstances of the story, and which, therefore, is truth or reality in terms of the conditions of the story. There is truth at symbolic level, and this is the highest kind of literary truth, the kind you get in the great books. A story may be true to the clothes people wore, the food they ate, the kind of language they spoke, and yet be wholly wrong and untrue in its presentation of their human nature. And a story may be fantastic in setting and remote in fact, and yet be wholly true to its people. This is the real truth. I have tried to keep this thought in mind in creating the characters of this story. One principle aim was to make them thoroughly likable and humorous, and in the case of the main character, to give him an inoffensive and sympathetic quality. If a child reading the story has the feeling that he would like such an animal for a pet, I will have been successful in its portrayal.

## TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Children have specific reactions to certain physical aspects of a book. I have taken these into consideration in determining those aspects of my book. First of all there is the cover. The cover, if it also has a jacket or dust cover, and most all books do, may be a solid color with only the title on it. It is the jacket that advertises the book on bookshop counters, so it is designed to attract attention; a simple bold design that tells something about the story. Generally a jacket is designed with one, two, or three flat colors and black. Sometimes full color is used but not often, because it is too expensive. The board cover of a book sometimes has the jacket design pasted on it, but not always. For my book I chose the same two colors that were used throughout the book, and black. I made the greater area of the cover a bright yellow, with a large simple illustration of the main character of the story, and large legible printing of the title. The book that fills a child with longing to read or to own it for himself, and which frequently induces him to steal it from the library shelves, is the one with a bright cover. The jacket of my book is the kind that can be pasted to the board cover and can also have a loose jacket of the exact same design.

Books in which pictures are as important as text, or more so, are generally planned for thirty-two or forty-eight pages. That number includes every inside page of the

book. The number that I used was thirty-two, determined by the length of the story. For very young children the story cannot be so long that the child loses interest before finishing, and must not be of excessive weight so that it is hard for the child to handle. It is for these reasons that there is a specific number of pages for this type of book. The size and thickness of the book is also determined by what is easy to handle for a child. Other things being equal, the largest books appear to be best preferred. The most desirable size averages 8" long, 6" wide, and 1" thick. In my book, as long as the thickness, with only 32 pages, was less than average, I could make the other dimensions greater and still retain the proper weight. The dimensions I used were 12" by 9" by  $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

The endpapers are the lining papers inside the cover. They make a double spread decoration, the same in the front and back of the book. I used an all-over type of design using some of the characters of the story. Each is of approximately the same importance, so that the reader is struck with the general effect of the page, rather than attracted to any one part. I used one color of medium value and black so that its visual effectiveness would not be greater than any of the illustrations in the story.

The title page is always on the right hand page or the frontispiece and title page are designed as one, spread across two pages. I found that the use of a double page

spread afforded a greater opportunity for an effective layout design. Lettering on the title page includes title, authors name and sometimes the illustrators name. In a book of this type the illustrator shares equal importance with the author. The story always begins on a right hand page.

My thesis might be classified as a formal "dummy" with the refinements found in the published form. The dummy is what is presented to a publisher for approval. He may then suggest certain changes before acetate plates are made. The usual dummy is the sketch plan for the whole book, laid out in pages the exact size the book is to be. It should be designed as a harmonious whole; jacket, endpapers, title page, full page drawings, and double spreads. On the double spreads it was important to be sure that nothing of importance in the drawing came at the fold in the middle of the book. In picture books of this kind it is permissible to "bleed off" the drawings- i.e. run off the edge of the page. The sketch dummy is the whole plan of illustration. The drawings are composed in the spaces, but need not be in finished technique. They can merely suggest the technique to be used for the finished drawings: pen and ink, pen and brush, lithograph crayon, or scratchboard. This black and white drawing, when finished, will make the key plate, the master plate which holds the whole picture together.

Several internal factors are of importance. The general

characteristics of pleasing illustrations in the choicest books are very similar in many respects. The color of the illustrations is bright, highly saturated, and fairly intense. A great deal of action and some humor are desirable. There are few details, and these are striking and well selected to appeal to children's interests. The colors I used were a bright yellow and a fairly intense blue-green with black and white, each color on alternating pages; one page predominantly yellow, the next predominantly blue-green. I may possibly have failed in regard to a great deal of action but this may also have been made up for by excessive humor. I tried for as much simplicity as possible, using few figures and subordinating or almost abolishing the background.

The materials I used were: Coquille board for all the pages, illustration board for the cover, Designer's Superfine Gouache Colour for the solid color areas, Lithograph crayon No. 3 and 5 for shading, and pen and india ink for details. To prevent the lithograph crayon from smearing and rubbing off on the opposing pages, I covered the cover with a thin acetate, and the pages with a heavier acetate, which incidentally was to serve another purpose. As the printed matter is an integral part of the design of the page, I wished to present it also, in the exact form that it would appear in a published state. Some of the printing was to be on colored areas. However, the paint did not lend itself to fine printing. Therefore I saw the possibility of having the acetate

protectors serve a dual purpose. The printing could be done on the protector with a special kind of ink and with its transparency give the appearance of being on the actual page. The one difficulty which I came up against was due to the brittleness of the acetate. It had a tendency to crack when folded and tear when bound.

Though the child may notice very little the actual typographical details and the printing niceties may be utterly lost as far as conscious appreciation is concerned, unconsciously his eye will be trained by good type arrangement and spacing, and the feeling of type well printed on a good paper, encased in decently made covers will leave its mark. The "feeling" of a good book, a well printed book, will grow within the child's range of appreciation even though he cannot explain his feeling of pleasure in terms of type, margins, paper, and the relationship of the illustrations to the type. I felt that the printed areas in my book should be done by hand so that the entire page, printed matter and illustration, would appear to be an integrated, unified design, the printing having the same personal quality as the illustration. Knowledge of types and print may not seem necessary for the illustrator of children's books. It is not essential unless the writer and the artist are one and the same, however, as I have stated before, the complete appearance of a page in a book is determined

by the relationship of the pictures and the type. Therefore it is advisable that the artist have a knowledge of these things and also an understanding of the suitability of these factors to the readers. From investigations made for the lower primary grade level, it was found that material printed in eighteen-point type, arranged in short lines, rather widely spaced, is the most desirable for the first grade. Twelve-point typeset in lines  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, with an interlinear spacing of four leads, is likely to get the best results in the second grade. Due to the limitations of the material I worked with, I tried to come as close to the second grade requirement as possible. The print must stand out clearly. Sharp contrast between ink and paper make learning to read much easier. It also contributes to the accuracy and pleasure of reading, by making word recognition easier, and reducing eye strain. Non-transparent paper is preferable to tinted, gray, or glossy white paper. The glossy white proves most conducive to fatigue, reducing accuracy and speed. Brilliant black ink against dull white makes the clearest impression. Letters should be simple in pattern, free from design or ornaments, have a uniformity of stroke so that the word makes a clear-cut impression. These things were considered when I chose the materials for my book. The coquille board afforded a dull white surface, the black ink making a sharp contrast against it. Occasion-

ally I placed the printing against a color, however, the colors were light in value and had a dull finish so that there is still a great deal of contrast between the printing and the background. The left margin of the printing should be uniformly straight and unbroken as much as possible. A break in the margin interferes with the return sweep of the eye from the end of one line to the beginning of the next. If decorative marginal borders break into the print, they are undesirable. To serve its purpose, an illustration must be placed as near as possible to the word picture or the idea which it interprets, but this cannot be at the expense of other hygienic factors, especially the arrangement of the printed page. Placing an illustration in the center of a printed page is just as serious. The properly placed illustration either occupies the whole of the right page, a three quarter double page spread, or the upper half of the right hand page. My book contains all three of these arrangements.

## METHODS OF REPRODUCTION

The craftsmanship of our book artists today has kept pace with their powers of expression. Ours is an age which has, through its emphasis on mass production and specialization, tended to separate the artist from the practical processes whereby his work can be reproduced and made available to the multitudes around him. But the special conditions under which books are produced have proved an exception to the general rule, and the economics of getting lots of color into low-priced book has joined with the graphic artist's natural interest in materials and processes to produce a very healthy relationship between the artist and the practical part of making books. The artist has to know and understand every detail of production. He has to be familiar with the possibilities and limitations of papers, binding materials methods of reproduction and the various printing processes. He must understand what is possible and what is impossible in color printing. Increasingly the only way in which several colors can be included is for the artist to make separate drawings for each color. In many instances these drawings will be made directly on stone for subsequent transfer to gigantic offset sheets. Thus the artist is involved up to his neck in the basic process whereby ink is transferred to paper. Of necessity he is close to the roots of his art, and from that closeness he gains strength and simplicity that promises growth in the years

to come.

An editor, in giving an assignment, specifies the technique to be used, the number of drawings, how many colors are to be used, and the size of the type page.

Finished drawings are generally made one half larger than the sketch, called one and one half enlargement, sometimes double size if the sketches are very small. Example of one and a half enlargement: if the sketch is 4 by 6 inches, the enlargement will be 6 by 9 inches.

Jacket measurements are very precise. The editor gives you exact dimensions for the front of the jacket and for the back strip, which may be anywhere from  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch to more than an inch, depending on how thick the book is to be. The drawing is laid out according to these specifications, allowing an eighth of an inch for "bleeding" all around.

Every drawing that is to be reproduced must be photographed by the engraver's camera. The camera is set so that it automatically reduces the picture to the desired size while photographing it. Negatives are transferred to metal plates by photo-mechanical means.

#### Line cuts or Zinc plates.

This is the simplest, least expensive process. Plates are made from black and white drawings; pen and ink, pen and brush (sometimes with the addition of dry brush or lithographic crayon tones), or scratchboard. The image on the

metal plate is etched out in an acid bath so that all blacks and lines are on the surface of the plate to catch the ink; everything else is cut out. (Woodcuts and linoleum blocks are similar in printing). Often these line cuts are printed at the same time as the type pages of the book. This process is called letter press. The line cut method is the one which I used. I felt that a publisher would be more apt to accept the work of an untried artist, if the work called for an inexpensive printing process. Several other processes which are good to know are:

#### Half Tone.

Wash or crayon or pencil drawings, photographs and color drawings are reproduced by half tone. The half tone screen is a sheet of glass with opaque lines crossing it at right angles, all over the sheet. This glass screen is placed between the camera lens and the drawing to be photographed. It breaks up all tones of the drawing or photograph into masses of dots. This negative is transferred to the metal plate and etched in a different manner from a line cut. Sometimes tones are added to a line drawing by Ben Day screens. There are any number of Ben Day screens, light and dark which will be added to the drawing by the engraver according to the artist's instructions. There are screen papers with varieties of tone made by lines or dots which may be cut and pasted on the drawing by the artist, adding tones that will reproduce on the line cut. Zip-a-

tone is an example of these screen papers. Also prepared papers may be used for the drawing, in which lines or dots for toning may be brought out by a special solution.

#### Offset Lithography.

This is the process most used for children's books unless the illustrations are black and white drawings done by line cuts and letter press. It is from the old process of lithographic printing from prepared stones on which the artist had made drawings. Lithographic plates, used in offset lithography, are sensitized metal plates with the image from the photographic negative transferred directly on top of the plate, generally with little or no etching, done by photo-mechanical means. The image is made ink repellent. Moisture applied to the plate at the time of printing by a water rollor, prevents the ink from taking on the parts of the plate not covered by the image of the drawing. The ink-receptive image picks up ink from the ink rollor, and this prints on a rubber blanket cylinder that passes over the plate. The paper passes under the cylinder and the image is printed from the rubber blanket to the paper, thus it is indirect instead of printing from plate to paper. A book printed by offset has type and key plates of drawings printed at the same time. The paper must run through the press for each color, although some huge color presses can print two or more colors at the same time. Often a 48 page picture book is printed on one large sheet

of paper; half on one side, half on the other. Type cases and plates are so arranged on the huge flat press that when the sheet is folded into a book the pages come in proper order.

### Color and Color Printing.

Ink colors are very different from pigment colors. The best way to assure a good printed result from the color drawing is to obtain a book of color ink samples and mix the color as closely as possible to some ink color, for the color sketch or color swatches to be sent to the engraver.

The simplest kind of color printing is the flat plate, or tint block, which is the same kind as a line cut. Color printing is so expensive at present that most specifications in doing picture books will call for flat color. In designing for this, there can be no variations of tone, lighter or darker, except by applying Zip-a-tone or Ben Day screens where lighter tones are desired. If limited to two or three colors, which is usual, variety can be obtained by printing over, for example; yellow over blue to get green, or red over blue to get purple, etc.

### Four Color Process.

Most paintings or full color drawings or color photographs, are reproduced by the four color photographic process. For this a color filter, as well as a half tone screen, is placed between the camera lens and the "copy" to be photographed. Scientifically prepared filters will pick out one

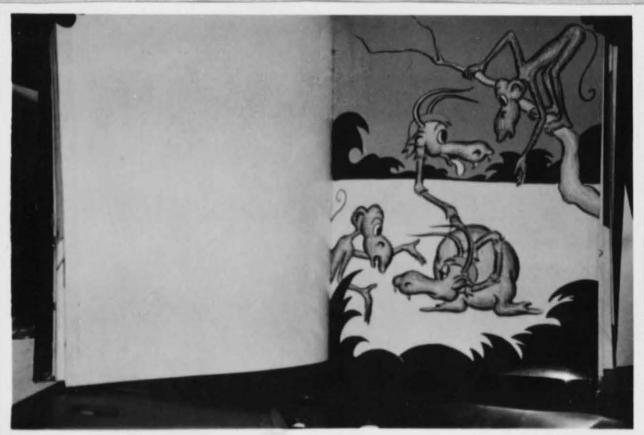
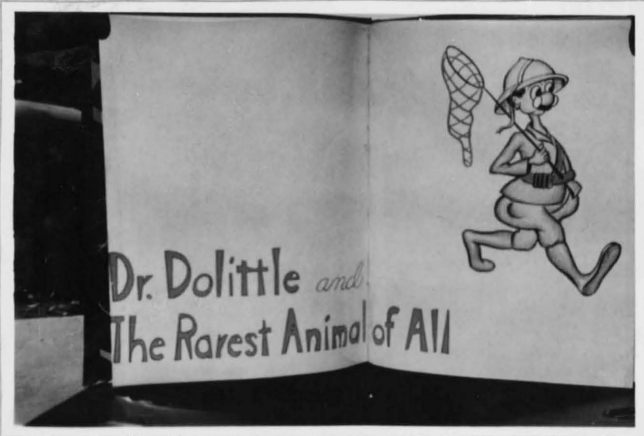
color at a time from the picture. A different filter is used for each of the three colors- red, blue and yellow. From half tone negatives of each the plates are made. Progressive proofs are pulled from these plates; first the yellow, second the red, third the red over the yellow, fourth the blue, fifth the yellow, red and blue one over the other, and finally the black printed over all, bringing out all the strength and accents. Four color printing is so expensive that it is not much used for picture books. Most color work is prepared by separations.

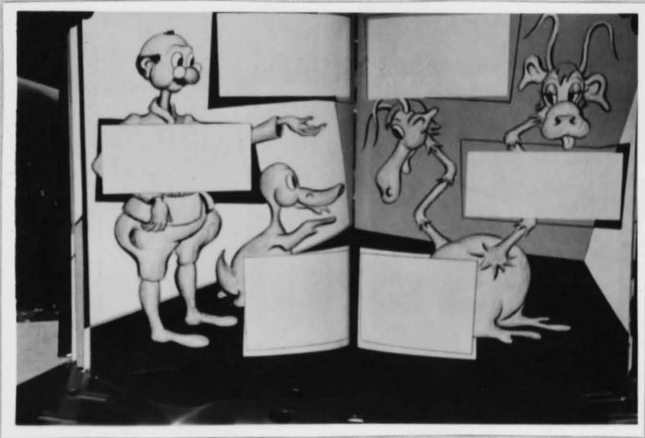
#### Color Separations.

The artist who is preparing drawings, using one, two or three flat colors, makes a careful sketch. Then one finished drawing is made in black and white. Over this is placed an overlay, tracing paper or acetate. One sheet is made for each color. On tracing paper the color can be indicated with colored wax crayon; on acetate the color areas are painted in black with special ink while thinking in the color. I chose the latter method with mine because of the more sturdy quality of the material. There are also color acetate sheets in standard ink colors, called Colotone. They are transparent although in full color. On each color sheet all sections not to be the color are scraped off or wiped off with a special solution, leaving it white. By this method you can lay each color sheet over the drawing and obtain a good idea as to how the colors will look when printed.

## CONCLUSION

There are very few elements in the average child's life to stimulate an interest in imagery, in understanding through the eye, in penetrating behind superficial appearances, in developing the kind of eye-appetite that leads to a richer and fuller experience in the wide world of pictures to which the adult has access. The growth of the picture book, its wider and fuller use, is a development full of promise. To the artist it has meant the maturing of a form in which he can function fully and with a sense of participating in the life of his community in a way that has been increasingly denied to artists by the traditional emphasis on the easel picture, and dominance of the collector, museum, and gallery system. This is a form that the artist can take seriously. It calls for the exercise of a wide range of creative powers and provides an added and ultimate satisfaction, that sense of fulfillment that comes to a worker who knows that what he makes meets a human need and that children are the richer for his labors.





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