

## Eastern Illinois University The Keep

---

Masters Theses

Student Theses & Publications

---

1983

# Dreamworlds and the Art of Illustration

Donna Crotchett

*Eastern Illinois University*

This research is a product of the graduate program in [Art](#) at Eastern Illinois University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

---

### Recommended Citation

Crotchett, Donna, "Dreamworlds and the Art of Illustration" (1983). *Masters Theses*. 2843.  
<https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/2843>

This is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact [tabruns@eiu.edu](mailto:tabruns@eiu.edu).

# THESIS REPRODUCTION CERTIFICATE

TO: Graduate Degree Candidates who have written formal theses.

SUBJECT: Permission to reproduce theses.

The University Library is receiving a number of requests from other institutions asking permission to reproduce dissertations for inclusion in their library holdings. Although no copyright laws are involved, we feel that professional courtesy demands that permission be obtained from the author before we allow theses to be copied.

Please sign one of the following statements:

Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University has my permission to lend my thesis to a reputable college or university for the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings.

---

Date

---

Author

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University not allow my thesis be reproduced because of personal reasons.

---

---

9-13-83

Date

Author

DREAMWORLDS AND

THE ART OF ILLUSTRATION

(TITLE)

BY

DONNA CROTCHETT

B.A. IN ART EDUCATION

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, 1977

## THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ART IN ART

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1983

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING  
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

9-13-83

DATE

ADVISER

9-13-83

DATE

COMMITTEE MEMBER

9-13-83

DATE

COMMITTEE MEMBER

9-13-83

DATE

DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON

Dreamworlds and  
The Art of Illustration

by

Donna Crotchett  
B.A. In Art Education  
Eastern Illinois University, 1977

Abstract of a Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Art  
at the Graduate School of  
Eastern Illinois University

Charleston, Illinois

1983

429636

While I was growing up, illustrations made deep impressions upon me. An illustration is a picture that explains and adds interest to the written part of a printed work such as a book. Often overlooked by others, for various reasons, this means of communication played a significant part in my life and art.

The history of illustration is a history of men and women, serious artists, who have produced an enormous amount of high-quality work. Many of their illustrations had their origins in fine art such as early religious painting and mythological themes. A large number of fine artists have also been book illustrators. Among these are such persons as Edgar Degas, Pablo Picasso, and Auguste Rodin, to name a few.

Through the years my interest in illustration has been growing to the point where my objective is to become an illustrator of children's books. To increase my understanding of this area I chose to study four Americans who impressed me. They are Howard Pyle, N. C. Wyeth, Maxfield Parrish, and Maurice Sendak. Also I would like to include the English painters Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

The first part of this paper is a brief historical review of the lives of Pyle, Wyeth, Parrish, and Sendak.

All of these illustrators have used their talents in a variety of ways other than book illustration: e.g., magazine illustration and mural painting. As I have studied their strengths - Pyle's superb technical skills, devotion, and imagination; Wyeth's ability to make his art come alive and his appreciation for the smallest details of nature; Parrish's craftsmanship and brilliant handling of color; and Sendak's philosophy of children's art and imaginative use of line and color - I have seen my own skills as an illustrator improve. Their dedication to art and high standards are exemplary.

The review of these illustrators will be followed by a comparison of different aspects of my art to the work of Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, artists who have had a significant impact upon my creative life. The conclusion will be a discussion of the history of my art, its present status, and the role it has served in my life.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	ii
LIST OF PLATES . . . . .	iii
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Chapter	
I.    FOUR AMERICANS . . . . .	3
Howard Pyle . . . . .	3
N. C. Wyeth . . . . .	5
Maxfield Parrish . . . . .	7
Maurice Sendak . . . . .	10
II.   DREAMWORLDS IN ART . . . . .	15
III.  THE DEVELOPMENT OF MY ART . . . . .	25
Finding My Own Individual Style . . . . .	25
<u>Perelandra</u> , An Important Influence . . . . .	27
Illustrating Children's Picturebooks . . . . .	30
PLATES . . . . .	38
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	47

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their help, without which I would not have been able to complete this paper: Carl Wilen, my advisor, who has been a source of inspiration and encouragement through the years; Milo Kaufmann, who generously gave his support and editorial assistance; Jim Johnson, the head of the Art Department at Eastern; Ben Watkins and Walter Sorge who were members of my graduate committee; my sister Susan, whose patience and companionship helped more than she could know; and my friends in the Purchasing Department at the University of Illinois, especially Phil Newcomb and Dean Garland.



## LIST OF PLATES

1. The Mermaid 1910 Howard Pyle . . . . . 38
2. The Reluctant Dragon 1898 Maxfield Parrish . . . 39
3. Beata Beatrix 1872 Dante Gabriel Charles  
    Rosetti . . . . . 40
4. You Left Me Alone 1979 Donna Crotchett . . . . . 41
5. The Briar Rose Series 4: The Sleeping Beauty  
    1870-90 Sir Edward Burne-Jones . . . . . 42
6. The Playhouse 1979 Donna Crotchett . . . . . 43
7. Emotions 1976 Donna Crotchett . . . . . 44
8. Black and white illustration from dummy book  
    1981 Donna Crotchett . . . . . 45
9. Colored illustration for The Place of the  
    Little Fuzzies 1981 Donna Crotchett . . . . . 46

## INTRODUCTION

We thought of ourselves not merely as illustrators but also as fine artists and took our work very seriously. We believed that the field of illustration was eminently worth while and that our goal was to paint the best pictures we knew how.<sup>1</sup>

While I was growing up, illustrations made deep impressions upon me. An illustration is a picture that explains and adds interest to the written part of a printed work such as a book. Often overlooked by others, for various reasons, this means of communication played a significant part in my life and art.

The history of illustration is a history of men and women, serious artists, who produced an enormous amount of high-quality work. Many of their illustrations had their origins in fine art such as early religious painting and mythological themes. A large number of fine artists have also been book illustrators. Among these are such persons as Edgar Degas, Pablo Picasso, and Auguste Rodin, to name a few.

Through the years my interest in illustration has been growing to the point where my objective is to become

---

<sup>1</sup>Floyd David, "The Decade: 1930-1940" in The Illustrator in America, 1900-1960's, comp. & ed. Walt Reed (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corp., 1966), p. 113.

an illustrator of children's books. To increase my understanding of this area I chose to study four Americans who impressed me. They are Howard Pyle, N. C. Wyeth, Maxfield Parrish, and Maurice Sendak. Also I would like to include the English painters Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

The first part of this paper is a brief historical review of the lives of Pyle, Wyeth, Parrish, and Sendak. All of these illustrators have used their talents in a variety of ways other than book illustration: e.g., magazine illustration and mural painting. As I have studied their strengths - Pyle's superb technical skills, devotion, and imagination; Wyeth's ability to make his art come alive and his appreciation for the smallest details of nature; Parrish's craftsmanship and brilliant handling of color; and Sendak's philosophy of children's art and imaginative use of line and color - I have seen my own skills as an illustrator improve. Their dedication to art and high standards are exemplary.

The review of these illustrators will be followed by a comparison of different aspects of my art to the work of Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, artists who have had a significant impact upon my creative life. The conclusion will be a discussion of the history of my art, its present status, and the role it has served in my life.

## I. FOUR AMERICANS

Howard Pyle (1853 - 1911) was an artist who had a remarkable influence on the development of illustration in America. In fact, he has often been referred to as the Father of American Illustration. As an illustrator and writer, Pyle made immensely important contributions in the field of children's books. Today many of his books are still in circulation. He did illustrations for all the major magazines of his time, and also taught a large group of artists who would carry on in the Pyle tradition after his death. Among his students were such talented artists as N. C. Wyeth, Jessie Wilcox Smith, Violet Oakley, Elizabeth Shippen Green, Harvey Dunn, Frank Schoonover, and Stanley Arthurs. Many of these are also known for their illustrations in children's books.

One of the ideas that Pyle was constantly trying to convey to his students was that they should make their pictures come to life. They should become so much a part of the subject they were portraying, that if they were painting a rainstorm, they should be able to feel the rain on their skin. "Project your mind into your picture," he would say, "until you actually live in it. Throw your heart into the picture and then jump in after it."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>Henry C. Pitz, The Brandywine Tradition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), p. 136-7.

Pyle wanted his students to have the same intense involvement that actors in the theatre demonstrate when assuming roles in a play. His own ability of concentration was such that it was a topic of conversation among his students and contributed to the Pyle legend.

To the older traditions of bookmaking, especially to that of children's books, Howard Pyle added new life. Before his time most of American illustration was a weak imitation of European fashions and tastes. It was stilted and lifeless, not at all a reflection of life in the vigorous young nation of America.

Pyle, who grew up in Wilmington, Delaware, near the Brandywine River, had a wonder and deep love for the landscape. He enjoyed roaming the countryside, drinking in the beauties of nature and allowing his vivid imagination to run free. His books such as The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood, Within the Capes, Pepper and Salt, The Wonder Clock, and Otto of the Silver Hand all have a health and vitality that have their roots in the very soil of Pyle's native land.

Pyle's art gives us this world and also glimpses of others, such as those of romance and fantasy where chivalry is still very much alive. In his tales we are confronted with knights, pirates, Indians, patriots, redcoats, kings, beggars, presidents, tailors, farmers, and frontiersmen.

Pyle's pictures are full of exciting drama and rich detail, solidly drawn in his highly individualized style. It is illustration at its best and shows what can be accomplished when a person with talent gives himself fully to his work.

A man who had great admiration for Howard Pyle and who himself became a great American illustrator was Newell Convers Wyeth (1882 - 1945), one of Pyle's most gifted students. Much of Wyeth's subject matter is similar to Pyle's. He also painted pirates, medieval life, and Americana, but with a drama and style uniquely his own. Among the more than one hundred books illustrated by Wyeth are such classics as Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe; The Last of the Mohicans and Deerslayer by James Fenimore Cooper; The Mysterious Stranger and Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain; and Treasure Island, Kidnapped, and The Black Arrow by Robert Louis Stevenson.

When he was almost twenty years old, N. C. Wyeth left home to attend The Howard Pyle School of Art in Wilmington Delaware. At that time it was the finest school of illustration in America. There emphasis was placed on hard work, constantly applied and living a simple life. Through long hours of concentrated work and the inspiration of Howard Pyle, Wyeth's talent was able to grow into the mature art that so many people are still able to enjoy today.



Like Pyle, whenever Wyeth painted, he was totally involved in his work. He thoroughly researched the periods he was depicting in his historical illustrations. He read much and collected props and costumes of all periods. He believed that in order to paint something, an artist had to know it well. He remarked:

I have come to the full conclusion that a man can only paint that which he knows even more than intimately. He has got to know it spiritually. And to do that he has got<sub>3</sub> to live around it, in it, and be a part of it.

For Wyeth "history was experience."<sup>4</sup> He tried to bring that experience to life and recapture the feelings of the people and place he was painting. He would draw upon his accumulated knowledge and identify totally with his subject. If the person he was creating was bending over, Wyeth would feel his own muscles strain as he painted. He commented, "After painting action scenes I have ached for hours because of having put myself in the other fellow's shoes as I realized him on canvas."<sup>5</sup> This type of corporal identification, Wyeth learned from Pyle, and it helped him to project some of his own life into his paintings.

Wyeth was a big man with an enormous supply of life and vitality to project. He was 6 feet 2 inches tall and

---

<sup>3</sup>Susan E. Meyer, America's Great Illustrators (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1978), p. 73.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

weighed around 210 pounds. He liked to work on a large surface, and even though his illustrations might be reduced to an 8 x 10" page, he would paint his pictures, perhaps 32 x 40". He used massive strokes that required the action of his entire body, using smaller strokes to quickly finish up details.

N. C. Wyeth had a love for nature that went beyond that of many so-called "landscape painters". He did not take nature casually, but identified with it in such a way as to feel with "passionate emotion the hot molten gold of sunlight, the heavy sultry distances and the burning breath of soft breezes."<sup>6</sup>

Along the Brandywine River and through the woods of Chadds Ford, the Wyeth family would often take walks. Wyeth has instilled his love for the many wonders of nature in his children. This can be seen in the paintings of Andrew Wyeth, his son, who has become a famous artist in his own right. His daughters, Henriette and Caroline are both accomplished painters, as well as his grandson Jamie.

Another American of exceptional talent who has achieved success and recognition through his illustrative work in children's books is Maxfield Parrish (1870 - 1966).

---

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 72.



He is also well-known for his famous blue pictures of the 1920's.

Parrish's art transports the viewer into a land of dreams. In this way it is similar to my own art. It is an idealized world, where the sky is bluer than any real sky, and everything seems to emanate a light of its own. The characters that he places in his colorful settings are usually young and attractive and seem lost in thought or involved in some other intense inward experience. The viewer cannot help but be drawn into the mood of a Parrish painting, whether it is the tranquility of Daybreak, one of his most popular paintings, or the sensations of pleasure and delight experienced by the swinging youth in The Dinkey Bird in Eugene Fields' book Poems of Childhood.

Poems of Childhood is one of the books Parrish has been best known for illustrating. It was published in 1904 and was the first book in which Parrish's paintings appeared in full color. The Dinkey Bird is the book's most popular illustration and is a depiction of a nude youth caught up in the joy and freedom of swinging against a blue background containing a castle. Other Parrish-illustrated children's books full of fantasy and imagination include The Golden Age and its sequel Dream Days, both written by Kenneth Grahame, The Knave of Hearts by Louise Saunders, and The Arabian Nights by Kate D. Wiggins and Nora A. Smith.

Parrish's influence on children goes beyond his book illustrations. His prints became so popular that in the 1920's they were a common sight almost everywhere in America. Copies of Daybreak were hung in homes, department stores, college dormitory rooms, and in hotel lobbies. A child could not help but encounter Parrish's paintings. How could he see those brilliant colors and imaginative landscapes without being affected? Also there were magazines with covers designed by Parrish such as Harper's Weekly, Harper's Monthly, Harper's Round Table, Harper's Young People, Scribner's, Century, Hearst's, and Collier's. These were easily left within the viewing of children.

The procedure Parrish used for his oil paintings that enabled him to produce such intense colors and gave the objects in his pictures the appearance of omitting their own light was lengthy and time consuming. It is comparable to the methods practiced by the old masters and involved applying layers of transparent glazes, one over top of the others. At the start, he would paint everything a monochrome of blue. Next, he applied yellow, which would yield his greens. He then continued building these very thin layers to obtain the colors he desired. Between each layer he painted an equally thin layer of varnish.

Parrish retained and developed characteristics common in children's imagination, but often lacking in that of

adults. The children's book illustrator Maurice Sendak has said that "imagination" is the single word that sums up "the qualities that make for excellence in children's literature."<sup>7</sup> Certainly Parrish's talents have gone far in achieving a high degree of excellence.

Maxfield Parrish was an exceptional artist. His art career began in 1895 and continued until early 1962 when he died at 91. For sixty-six years he created pictures of superb quality which included book illustrations, poster designs, magazine covers, illustrations for calendars and commercial products, landscape paintings, and murals. All of these were executed with the same excellent craftsmanship and meticulous handling of details for which the artist is famous and which has captured my own respect and admiration.

Maurice Sendak is one of the best-known children's book artists in America. His most popular picturebook Where the Wild Things Are, which he both wrote and illustrated, has been in great demand in the United States as well as in France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, and the Scandinavian countries. He was the recipient of the Hans Christian Anderson Medal in 1970, which is the closest

---

<sup>7</sup>Selma G. Lanes, The Art of Maurice Sendak (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1980), p. 66.

approximation to a Nobel Prize in the world of children's books.

Sendak's style is unique. There is a freshness in his artwork that does not allow it to go unnoticed. This is not something that happened accidentally, but has been achieved by many hours spent by Sendak emulating master illustrators and studying children's books of the past and present. He is not a mere copyist, but has demonstrated wisdom and ability in taking what he needed and using it in a way that would fit his own style.

Fascinated with childhood, Sendak has for a main theme in his books the exploration of a child's frustration, rage, and confusion. In The Wild Things the focus is on the feelings of a youngster named Max who becomes angry when his mother reprimands him for acting like a "wild thing" when he makes mischief while wearing a wolf costume. She sends him to his room without supper, and he finds escape in a dream fantasy where he encounters potentially terrifying wild things.

Sendak feels that anxiety and fear are a part of a child's everyday life. Fantasy helps them deal with frustrating emotions. He says, "It [fantasy] is the best means they have for taming Wild Things."<sup>8</sup>

Where the Wild Things Are has stirred up some heated controversy. Many adults have found the book to be

---

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

frightening and have voiced their fears that it might induce children to have nightmares and in other ways be psychologically harmful. To their reactions Sendak has responded, "[c]hildren are their own best censors and will neither listen to nor read on their own things that make them uncomfortable."<sup>9</sup> At first Sendak's editor, Ursula Normstrom, had doubts about the book, but after giving it careful consideration commented:

It is always the adults we have to contend with - most children under the age of ten will react creatively to the best work of a truly creative person. But too often adults sift their reactions to creative picture books through their own adult experiences.<sup>10</sup>

Maurice Sendak's philosophy on children's books has been developing since he was quite young, and he has many interesting things to say on the subject. From the time he was a young boy, Sendak and his brother Jack were binding and illustrating their own storybooks.

An artist who is fully dedicated to his work, Sendak suffers and labors over his books. Each detail to him is important. He tells us:

A picture book is not what most people think it is -- an easy thing, with lots of pictures in it, to read to small children. For me, it is a damned difficult thing to do, 'like working in a complicated and challenging poetic form. It demands so much that you have to be on top of the situation

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

all the time, finally to achieve something so simple and so put together--so seamless--that it looks as if you knocked it off in no time. One stitch showing and you've lost the game.<sup>11</sup>

Just as Howard Pyle and N. C. Wyeth believed that an artist should live in his pictures, Sendak is a man who lives in his picturebooks. He says that "the picturebook is where I put down those fantasies that have been with me all my life...it is where I fight all my battles and hopefully, I win my wars."<sup>12</sup>

To examine the life of Maurice Sendak is to see a man with strong convictions. His art is his mission in life. He has a vision of the world and feels compelled to communicate that vision to others even when his view does not necessarily go along with current trends. His art is always full of surprises, and this is one of the things that helps set him above so many of the other artists working in his field.

Howard Pyle, N. C. Wyeth, Maxfield Parrish, and Maurice Sendak all shared an urgent need to create. For Sendak, his art was his mission in life. It was his way of sharing a part of himself and his own insights with others. Howard Pyle taught art with an almost missionary zeal. Parrish was unwilling to let any distractions keep him from his art which was his most intense concern.

---

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 125.



Wyeth was a man who not only made art, but lived it as well.

The need for expression is evident in the "Four". They each had something vital to communicate.

## II. DREAMWORLDS IN ART

An artist of fantasy landscapes is naturally drawn to other artists who seem to share some of the same dreams and concerns. Two 19th Century English Pre-Raphaelite painters, Sir Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti have attracted my interest. Besides being painters, they have also done illustrative work. There is a dream-like quality to their art which transports the viewer into another world and time. Their art reflects the world of the soul rather than the reality they saw around them. There is something about the art of these two men that I find deeply moving, as if part of my own inner life is being expressed.

During the middle part of the 19th Century, England was anything but a dreamworld. The industrial revolution was underway, and materialism was rapidly increasing. Some of the worst slums in Britain were in Birmingham where Burne-Jones grew up. The city was overcrowded. There was widespread illiteracy, disease, hunger, riots, prostitution, alcoholism, and harsh labor. Such were the times in which Burne-Jones and Rossetti lived, and which their entire lives were spent trying to escape.

Both Burne-Jones and Rossetti found comfort in romanticizing the past. Especially fond of the medieval period,



they painted figures in medieval dress. It represented to them an age that was less corrupt, a time "when life and art were closer to nature."<sup>13</sup> Their subjects were often taken from mythology and fairytale as well as from works like Malory's Morte d' Arthur.

Through art, Burne-Jones and Rossetti found escape from their world of ugliness and also were able to bring something of beauty into it. Burne-Jones made the comment, "The more materialistic science becomes, the more angels shall I paint."<sup>14</sup> By not painting the world as it was they were able to give the viewer a vision that was finer than what was actually present.

Burne-Jones' art was his "private daydream," a vision of "the never-never land he created for his own delight."<sup>15</sup> He commented, "I mean by a picture a beautiful romantic dream of something that never was, never will be--in a light better than any light that ever shone--in a land no one can define, or remember, only desire."<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup>Martin Harrison and Bill Waters, Burne-Jones (London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd., 1973), p. 45.

<sup>14</sup>Francis Spalding, Magnificent Dreams, Burne-Jones and the Late Victorians (Oxford: Phaidon Press Limited, 1978), p. 34.

<sup>15</sup>David Cecil, Visionary and Dreamer, Two Poetic Painters, Samuel Palmer and Edward Burne-Jones (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), 145.

<sup>16</sup>Harrison and Waters, Burne-Jones, p. 157.

My art is similar to Burne-Jones' and Rossetti's in that it too presents hopes for a more ideal existence. It is difficult for me to be content with the harshness and corruption that I see around me, and drawing is a way I can express those things for which I long. It is a way of creating something new and different and of adding color and interest to my own life and perhaps to the lives of those around me.

Even though Burne-Jones, Rossetti, and I all present dreamworlds in our art, there is quite a difference in subject matter and style. My drawings are done in a cartoonish style and the main emphasis is on landscape with little creatures scattered throughout, while Burne-Jones and Rossetti worked in a more realistic manner than I, and in their pictures the human figure was the major element of expression.

Fantasy worlds show us the ideal. An expression of our dreams and desires, fantasy helps take our minds off the dullness and hardships we are facing. The beautiful and imaginative help to soften our aches and inspire us.

The things that are seen are not the only things that are real. Thoughts, emotions, and dreams are an important part of the human experience, and these are the things that Burne-Jones', Rossetti's, and my art express. It is a way of sharing with the viewer a reality that goes

beyond the material world. Of Burne-Jones' pictures, David Cecil writes:

They are our only record of his inner life. The nature of his secret hopes, raptures, aspirations, must be deduced from them: it is in these, his painted poems that we must look for the history of Burne-Jones' spirit.<sup>17</sup>

Art was more than just a pastime for Burne-Jones. He had a need to express those things that were within. It was his means of self-discovery, his own self-analysis. His art was his way of showing a part of his personality that could not be revealed in any other way. These things are also true of my own art. The painter Ivan Albright has commented:

Art is a book exposing only the artist himself: who he is, what he is, what he thinks. Art is his own psychoanalysis and he is his own psychiatrist, his life experience, the theme he works with.<sup>18</sup>

Art has always played an important part in Burne-Jones' life. As a child, drawing had been a release for him. His mother died only six days after he was born in 1833, and his father was a shy, poetic man who had difficulty expressing his love for his son. Burne-Jones had a nurse to take care of him and spent most of his time alone. Since he did not have any brothers or sisters with which to play, he drew. Drawing helped him to deal with the insecurity he felt in not having people around for emotional support.

---

<sup>17</sup>Cecil, Visionary and Dreamer, p. 144.

<sup>18</sup>Ivan Albright, "Ivan Albright" in The Artist's Voice, ed. Katherine Kuh (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 28.

Harrison and Waters state:

There was a therapeutic necessity in his drawing, his insecurity led to restless nights with bad dreams, and in drawing the inventions of his vivid imagination he helped to release the tension resulting from his maladjustment. This is the subsequent role and character of the art of Burne-Jones; its singular autobiographical nature and passionate involvement indicate the part it played in his life.<sup>19</sup>

It seems that all human beings have the need to express themselves to help them know themselves better. Cecil Osborne writes, "In disclosing ourselves to 'significant others' we discover our true identity."<sup>20</sup> For many people talking is a way this is accomplished. When Burne-Jones was young this form of communication was not readily available to him, but art was.

In the 1850's Burne-Jones attended Oxford University. There he became exposed to the paintings of some of the Pre-Raphaelites such as Sir John Everett Millais, Charles Alston Collins, and Holman Hunt. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was a revolutionary art movement beginning in the mid-19th Century as a protest against the Grand Manner, which according to the group, originated with Raphael. Strongly influenced by the early Flemings, the Pre-Raphaelites worked in a detailed realistic manner.

---

<sup>19</sup> Harrison and Waters, Burne-Jones, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Cecil Osborne, The Art of Learning to Love Yourself (Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Zondervan Corporation, 1976), p. 8.

After seeing The Maids of Elfinmere, a drawing by Rossetti who was already painting with the Pre-Raphaelites, Burne-Jones was very much impressed. He had been hearing much about Rossetti and decided to go to London to meet him. Burne-Jones was not disappointed in their meeting. It developed into an association that had a lasting influence on both of their lives.

One of the benefits Burne-Jones received from their friendship was Rossetti's encouragement for him to be himself in his art. Concerning Rossetti's influence Burne-Jones informed us, "He taught me to have no fear or shame of my own ideas...to seek no popularity, to be altogether myself, not to be afraid of myself, but to do the thing I liked most."<sup>21</sup> The thing that Burne-Jones enjoyed the most was drawing from his imagination.

In Rossetti, Burne-Jones found another artist who like himself was "concerned with the inner landscape of the mind and his use of the outer world as a symbol of it."<sup>22</sup> This can be seen in one of Rossetti's most sensitive paintings and a work of art that is among my favorites, Beata Beatrix (1872) (Plate 3).

Rossetti initially began this painting a few years before Elizabeth Siddal, whom he had married in 1860,

---

<sup>21</sup>Cecil, Visionary and Dreamer, p. 118.

<sup>22</sup>Harrison and Waters, Burne-Jones, p. 23.



died. His wife posed for the picture before her death, after which Rossetti completed it. He decided to treat it symbolically as the death of Beatrice from Dante's Vita Nuova.

In Rossetti's painting, Beatrice is shown in a trance-like state, unconscious of the world around her as she is about to make her transition from earth to heaven. In the background can be seen the figure of love as well as Beatrice's lover whom she is leaving behind. The sundial reads nine o'clock which is the hour of her death.

This painting evokes a mood that makes it more than a portrait of a beautiful woman. It is a portrait of Rossetti's own soul. This is true of both Burne-Jones' and Rossetti's works whenever they incorporate the human figure, particularly women. For them "the image of a beautiful woman was used as a symbol of the artist's mental life and spirit."<sup>23</sup> The facial expression is an important element in revealing the artist's inner life.

In his book The Romantic West, 1789-1850, Eugénie De Keyser compares the human figure to a landscape. He tells us that "sleep, reverie, the averted gaze, these are more effective keys to the heart than any painted tears, for they make a person like a landscape, something

---

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

that is here and not here, the insubstantial pageant of a dream or yearning."<sup>24</sup> In many of Rossetti's and Burne-Jones' paintings, the figures seem to be completely absorbed within themselves, and there is little action. This is true of the central figure in Beata Beatrix. There is a strong emotional quality in this painting, and through the figure Rossetti is expressing his own longings.

The role that the figure plays in Rossetti's and Burne-Jones' art is comparable to that which landscape assumes in my drawings in expressing the inner life of the artist. Eugénie De Keyser writes:

The artist who shrinks from the contest with reality will depict places that are merely a projection of his dreams. Landscape is especially suited to serve the poet or painter as a mirror.<sup>25</sup>

Two of my landscape drawings The Resting Place and You Left Me Alone (Plate 4) reveal my desire for a more ideal world. They present places that are retreats from the material world, of solitude and peace. Being a dreamer I am always longing for something beyond the material world. Art gives me a way to express this longing.

To Burne-Jones and Rossetti, art was something that transcended the earthly. To them it was associated with the spiritual. Burne-Jones commented, "To me this weary,

---

<sup>24</sup>Eugénie De Keyser, The Romantic West, 1789-1850 (Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing Company, 1965), p. 147.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

toiling, world is none other than 'Our Lady of Sorrows'... Art - the power of bringing God into the world...is giving back her child that was crucified to 'Our Lady of Sorrows.'"<sup>26</sup>

Another similarity between Burne-Jones' art and mine is in the use of line to establish decorative rhythms. In his work Burne-Jones did not use deep space and neither do I. His use of line to carry the viewer's eye through the picture is evident in such works as The Briar Rose Series 4: The Sleeping Beauty (1870-90) (Plate 5). In this picture the maidens are arranged in a domino fashion so that the eye is carried from the left to the right by the contours of the girls. The repetition in the folds of the green drapery in the background aids in this movement across the surface of the picture. Burne-Jones' surfaces are full of interesting detail for the viewer to investigate.

In my art line plays an important role in carrying the eye through the picture. The Playhouse (Plate 6) is writhing with curving lines that keep the eye in motion. In You Left Me Alone, which has been previously mentioned, movement is established by line as well as repetition of shape. This is especially noticeable in the stairstep-like forms in the lower portion of the drawing.

---

<sup>26</sup>Harrison and Waters, Burne-Jones, p. 157.



Up to the present time, most of my art has been basically two-dimensional in effect with the emphasis on line. In the work I have recently been doing with children's picturebooks more emphasis has been put on three-dimensional effects.

### III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF MY ART

I have always been fascinated with human behavior, and I thought a study of psychology was an excellent avenue to self understanding. Recently I have begun to realize that art has been a type of psychology for me in that it has helped me in my process of self-discovery. The more I express myself through creating, the more I find out concerning my own identity. It has also become a tangible way to express my dreams and has served as an outlet for my feelings.

#### Finding My Own Individual Style

Until my junior year in college my art was very imitative and sterile. As it often is with beginning art students, I relied too much on copying from photographs and had not as yet found an individual style. By the Spring of 1976 I had begun to draw in a more personal way. Art came alive for me and had a tremendous impact on my life.

The change occurred in a drawing class. The instructor was very inspiring and always challenged me to do my best work. An assignment had been given, and I was experiencing pressures from my other classes as well as having problems in my personal life. The addition of

this drawing assignment only served to heighten the existing tension, and I managed to work myself into a highly emotional state. This is one instance, however, when disturbing emotions became an asset to my artistic growth. On this occasion I discovered how drawing could serve as a release for feelings and tensions that had been building up inside.

Since the library was relatively free from distractions, I decided to go there to work on the drawing assignment. Walking up to the third floor where the periodicals are kept, I found a secluded spot by a window. I remember being extremely nervous and high-strung, so much that I felt as if someone had plugged me into an electrical outlet.

Still lacking any appropriate conception of what to draw, I decided to use the assignment as a release for all the stress I was experiencing. Sensitively touching the drawing paper with my pen, I made marks according to the corresponding emotions that I wanted to express. In my mind I would think "MAD, MAD, MAD" and make dark heavy lines, pressing deeply into the paper. Then I would think about words like "delicate" and "sensitive" and make lines expressive of those feelings. Performing this exercise did much to relieve some of my frustration. Instead of keeping everything inside, I was communicating my feelings on paper.

After drawing for a while, I noticed that my picture was taking on the appearance of a landscape. Also, I was aware that some shapes resembled objects. One shape might suggest the face of an animal, another, a volcano.

When I was finished with the basic pen drawing I returned to my dormitory room to add color and incorporate shading, since the main purpose of the assignment was to explore color. For this I used colored pencils, which is still the media I most enjoy using.

The dismal and depressing mood of the completed picture seems appropriate, in that it was in harmony with my feelings at the time of inception (Plate 7). The drawing is emotionally charged, expressing tension in the types of lines used. I feel that this was a successful drawing because for the first time I was able to express my own feelings and a part of my inner self in appropriate form. It provided me with an excitement in the act of drawing that I had never before experienced and was the beginning of a new direction in my art.

#### Perelandra, An Important Influence

Sometimes events happen in our lives that appear to be of no consequence, such as reading a book, but the impact can be such as to leave a lasting impression on one's life. This is the type of influence that C. S. Lewis' book Perelandra had upon my artwork. The imagery

in this book so strongly impressed me that as soon as I finished reading it, I felt compelled to draw a picture of it.

In Perelandra, Lewis describes a planet of color and unearthly delights. It is a paradisaical world with a golden sky and continuous sea of golden-green spreading across its surface. Floating islands travel its waters at often breathtaking speeds. One of these islands is described as ending "in a fringe of undoubtedly vegetable matter; it trailed in fact, a dark skirt of tubes and strings and bladders."<sup>27</sup>

As the author takes us inland on an island of Perelandra there is a wooded area. Here can be seen "strange trees with tube-like trunks of grey and purple spreading rich canopies" above the viewer's head "in which orange, silver and blue were the predominant colors."<sup>28</sup> There are bubble trees whose bright spheres upon bursting produce a coolness in the air which makes a person feel very "fresh and alert."<sup>29</sup>

Everything on this unique planet is rich and unforgettable. Even the fruit found here is of a new and

---

<sup>27</sup>C. S. Lewis, Perelandra (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1944), p. 89.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

extraordinary kind. The taste of its juice is of such quality that "for one draught of this on earth wars would be fought and nations betrayed."<sup>30</sup>

After I read Perelandra there was a noticeable change in my art. I began to draw more colorful and imaginative landscapes. Unusual types of vegetation began to appear. Trees laden with moss and vines became a favorite subject.

The images that Lewis' writing placed in my mind were here to stay. Somehow this creation of his met a need for me. He gave me a vision of a world that I wanted to take for my own. It was a paradise, a retreat, a world of color and imagination, a return to the security and ease of childhood. Through this vision I found a language to express my dreams and longings. My art became a vehicle for its communication.

Before long little creatures began to emerge and show themselves in my landscapes. The drawings began to take on a life of their own. It was as if I had discovered a way to go back to childhood through my pictures. I would enter into them and live in them. There were holes to crawl into, vines to climb, bridges to cross, flowers to delight in, and dwellings to explore. Stories about the little creatures and their exploits would take form in my mind while I drew.

---

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

Illustrating Children's Picturebooks

As my art has grown and developed, it has taken me into the writing and illustrating of picturebooks for children. The picturebook is a fascinating artform offering a wide range of possibilities for creative expression to the artist.

A picturebook differs from an illustrated book in which the text is the most important part of the book. The pictures could be excluded from an illustrated book, and the book would still be able to carry its message. This is not true of a picturebook. In a picturebook the pictures play a significant role and are as important, or more important than the text. A good definition of a picturebook is "a special mix of text and art, in which the pictures are vitally needed to fill in what the words leave unsaid; the words in turn are indispensable to moving narrative forward during whatever time--or space--gaps exist between illustrations."<sup>31</sup>

Through the picturebook the artist can express many of his own personal feelings and experiences in a simple yet universal way. The possibilities for this are enlarged when one writes the text and also creates the illustrations in conjunction with the story. N. C. Wyeth believed that "Creative expression...is simply a visual

---

<sup>31</sup>Lanes, The Art of Maurice Sendak, p. 85.



statement of the artist's soul."<sup>32</sup> If the observer looks closely, he can see various aspects of the creator's personality carried by the images and stories of picture-books.

The autobiographical quality of picturebooks is evident in the works of Maurice Sendak. Glimpses of Sendak, the child, are seen in Kenny's Window and Very Far Away, both written and illustrated by him. When Maurice was a child he was frequently ill and became an observer of the life going on around him rather than an active participant. In Kenny's Window the main character, Kenny, is portrayed as "an introverted dreamer" while Martin in Very Far Away is "a fussy passive loner."<sup>33</sup>

One of my current projects is a picturebook called The Place of the Little Fuzzies. The text has been written and the colored illustrations are almost completed. I have designed a "dummy" book to show the format the finished book will follow (Plate 8). It has the verse printed out in the selected type and black and white contour line drawings indicating where the colored illustrations will be placed.

After writing the text, I consulted with U. Milo Kaufmann, a good friend and also a professor of English

---

<sup>32</sup>Meyer, America's Great Illustrators, p. 77.

<sup>33</sup>Lanes, The Art of Maurice Sendak, p. 17.



at the University of Illinois. He assisted me in revising the verse to make it more interesting. Here is the completed text. Each number represents a new illustration. There are a few changes in the verse that have not yet been made in the dummy book. The title will probably be shortened to The Little Fuzzies.

The Place of the Little Fuzzies

- 1 Last night I took a trip  
When no one was around  
No one saw me leave  
And I didn't make a sound.
- 2 I traveled to a place  
Where no one's ever been  
Quite by the world's edge  
Where the water's green.
- 3 In that magic place  
Everything was bright  
Blooms and fruits and vegetables  
Bursting with delight.
- 4 There were cliffs to master  
5 And holes to scramble through  
6 So very much to wonder at  
7 So very much to do.
- But the most IMPRESSIVE marvel  
Of all that there I saw...
- 8 Was a fuzzy little creature  
Who was cute and shy and small.
- 9 I looked in admiration  
And he answered with a wink
- 10 So I picked him up and hugged him  
Quicker than a blink.
- 11 Then he bid me follow him  
To meet with all the others
- 12 His neighbors and his friends  
His sisters and his brothers (Plate 9).

- 13 They offered me some food  
14 And showed me all around  
15 And loveliest of all  
Was their charming fuzzy town.
- 16 The time then came for me to go  
Our visit had to end  
Before I left I made a vow  
That I'd be back again.

The verse by itself is incomplete in displaying the full effect of the book. As I had mentioned before, in a picturebook the pictures contribute as much or more than the text. To have the finished book before you would show how important both the verse and the pictures are in communicating the book's message.

Just as Sendak's books tell us something about himself, so are there characteristics of The Place of the Little Fuzzies that display my personality and fantasies. The little fuzzies are characters with which I closely identify. Their personality traits are reflective of the manner in which I perceive myself and are expressive of feelings that I often have.

These features are suggestive of the inadequacy and vulnerability that I feel many times in coping with life and its pressures. I am sure that other people feel this way also. Through drawing I have found a vehicle to express these things in a personal way. Like the fuzzies, my personality tends to be that of a quiet, shy, and somewhat passive person. This presents certain problems when

living in a society where aggressiveness is a necessary ingredient and where shyness at times can be a handicap.

The mental abilities of the fuzzies are comparable to those of a child. They are not worldly wise, although they are good and gentle creatures, and once they overcome their fears in making new acquaintances they are steadfast in their devotion and loyalty. To demonstrate this limitation of the fuzzies let me suggest that if a dangerous creature such as an obviously hostile dragon found his way into their idyllic garden, these little hairy characters might not even have sense enough to run for cover. One of the younger ones might even wander casually up to the beast out of curiosity.

This characteristic of the fuzzies--one that I project upon them--need not imply that I see myself as lacking in intelligence, but rather it is expressive of the naivete I feel in living in a world where there are so many things that I do not understand. This is part of being human and limited, capable of seeing only fragments of the total picture as we live. The most we can do is learn as we go.

As an artist my interests take me into activities that are directed toward the creative part of the brain rather than the analytical. The world of the imagination is often more exciting to me than the real world, because I can shape it myself and make it what I please. The

characters say and do what I want them to. It gives me a sense of control that is sometimes difficult to achieve in real life.

A characteristic of the fuzzies that is more pronounced in earlier drawings than in my picturebook illustrations is a noticeable self-consciousness and guarded quality. In You Left Me Alone, a drawing which is one of my favorites, the fuzzies have stopped all activity and are found staring at the viewer. There is a distance between fuzzies and the viewer, and it is almost as if the fuzzies are characters on a stage. They know they are being watched, but at the same time they are spectators. They look out as the viewer looks in. As long as the viewer is watching they remain frozen and motionless, but as soon as he is gone, there is an anticipation that the fuzzies will return to their play and escapades.

This self-conscious character of the drawing was not intentional, but it is a reflection of an attitude in my own life that has caused me considerable frustration. Often in social situations, especially where there is a group of people, I become guarded and quiet. Instead of being a participant in the activity and conversation around me, I find myself being an observer.

As my acceptance of life becomes greater and I become more mature, my art will probably show changes. Some

changes are already apparent. The fuzzies now have arms and are becoming more three dimensional and solid in form. This could in part be attributed to a growth in my technical skill, but there are also changes in my personality that could be contributing factors.

In the near future I can see the development of fuzzies with obvious mouths who are more playful and interact more freely with their playmates. Perhaps they will become more versatile as well in adapting to changing environment.

Already I am becoming more assertive and am trying to deal with reality instead of often trying to escape from it. This new acceptance of reality does not necessarily mean that I will disregard fantasy art as a vehicle of expression, although an artist can never really be sure what direction his art may take. The most successful fantasy is that which is rooted most deeply in reality. Maurice Sendak has pointed out repeatedly that "All successful fantasy must be rooted in living fact."<sup>34</sup> As I continue to grow as a person and as an artist I hope that I will be able to create a more substantial and effective fantasy art--an art as mature and powerful as Pyle's, Parrish's, Sendak's, and Wyeth's. In discussing Sendak's work, Selma G. Lanes expresses a thought that I would like to see true

---

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

of my art someday. She writes "the artist's fantasy is not spun of gossamar; rather it seems built of bricks, made not for the moment, but for the ages."<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

Plate 1 The Mermaid 1910  
Howard Pyle  
Oil on canvas 57 x 39"





Plate 2 The Fisherman's Boy 1896  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 120 cm

Plate 2 The Reluctant Dragon 1898  
Maxfield Parrish  
Oil on stretched paper



PLATE 1. Dragon of St. Mary, 1872.  
Giant Dragon of St. Mary, 1872.

Plate 3 Beata Beatrix 1872  
Dante Gabriel Charles Rossetti



FIGURE 4. *The Boy with the Apple*, 1861  
John Everett Millais  
Oil on canvas, 18 1/2 x 14 1/2 inches  
The Art Institute of Chicago

Plate 4 You Left Me Alone 1979  
Donna Crotchett  
Colored pencil and ink  
10 x 13-1/2"



PLATE 7. THE GARDEN OF THE GARDEN 21  
1921. THE GARDEN OF THE GARDEN 21  
THE GARDEN OF THE GARDEN 21



Plate 5   The Briar Rose   Series 4:  
The Sleeping Beauty 1870-90  
Sir Edward Burne-Jones



Plate 1. The Lullaby. 1879.  
John Everett Millais.  
Colors, pencils and ink.

Plate 6 The Playhouse 1979  
Donna Crotchett  
Colored pencil and ink



Plate 100. Fantasy, 1976.  
Pencil and ink.  
100 x 100 cm.

Plate 7 Emotions 1976  
Donna Crotchett  
Colored pencil and ink  
14 x 16-1/2"



Plate 3 Black and white illustration from  
The Book of the Dead  
1891 22 x 12

Plate 8   Black and white illustration from  
             dummy book 1981  
Donna Crotchett  
Ink       11 x 11"





Walter D. ... for the ...  
... 1901  
... 3-1/2 x 11"

Plate 9 Colored illustration for The Place  
of the Little Fuzzies 1981  
Donna Crotchett  
Colored pencil 9-1/2 x 12"



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albright, Ivan. "Ivan Albright." In The Artist's Voice, pp. 23-37. Edited by Katherine Kuh. New York: Harper and Row, 1962.
- Cecil, David. Visionary and Dreamer, Two Poetic Painters, Samuel Palmer and Edward Burne-Jones. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Davis, Floyd. "The Decade: 1930-1940." In The Illustrator in America, 1900-1960's, p. 113. Comp. & ed. by Walt Reed. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corp., 1966.
- De Keyser, Eugénie. The Romantic West, 1789-1850. Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing Company, 1965.
- Harrison, Martin, and Waters, Bill. Burne-Jones. London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd., 1973.
- Lanes, Selma G. The Art of Maurice Sendak. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1980.
- Lewis, C. S. Perelandra. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1944.
- Meyer, Susan E. America's Great Illustrators. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1978.
- Osborne, Cecil. The Art of Learning to Love Yourself. Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Zondervan Corporation, 1976.
- Pitz, Henry C. The Brandywine Tradition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969.
- Spalding, Francis. Magnificent Dreams, Burne-Jones and the Late Victorians. Oxford: Phaidon Press Limited, 1978.