

An Approach to Authoring and Publishing Children's Literature

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by  
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### **Abstract**

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This dissertation research explores the process of authoring and publishing children's literature, in particular children's picture books. The dissertation offers an overview of what an author might expect to encounter between the inspirational moment an idea occurs to her to the day her manuscript arrives at a publishing house. The dissertation research is supported with examples of practical application.

The authoring process begins with market research. For this one needs to know her audience-the young child. The dissertation explains the importance of studying child psychology and understanding the developmental stages of childhood. Writing a board book for a one-year old is different from writing a poem for a four-year old. The young child is a keen observer and a vicious critic. If an author is ignorant as to the needs of her audience, no ideas will ever become books. Agents and publishers are professionals at spotting an author who has not done her homework, who is an amateur.

Another aspect of market research is to be aware of what is currently being published. Books you see in libraries and bookstores are manuscripts publishers have accepted. Not only does an author want to know what is currently on shelves, but to study the classics. Studying the classics provides a foundation for writing. Understanding what has been written for children in the past that has been considered the finest in writing and illustrating is a prerequisite for any serious author of children's literature. The classics reveal the finest in storytelling.

This dissertation examines the scholarly work of Joseph Campbell on the theme of the monomyth-the one story told by all humans through all the ages. Understanding the roots of storytelling offers the author a platform from which she may begin to weave her own creative stories for her young audience knowing that the elements of heroes and quests and happy returns are all integral to the child's life. In this manner this research examines how books may nurture childhood needs.

The dissertation provides a rationale of why aspiring authors need to stay abreast of contemporary cultural issues facing today's youth, and explains the necessity of embracing the diversity of today's multicultural audience. This aspect is both market research and a way to know ones audience.

Writing and networking go hand in hand. The authoring-publishing process involves authors realizing the benefits of seminars, conferences, writing groups, and making personal contacts in the book industry. Once an author has produced a manuscript there are specific rules and regulations for submitting work and every agent or publisher has their own way of doing business. The dissertation explains that it is the author's responsibility to know submission etiquette of each prospective publishing company. Within this dissertation, one could find direction as well as real-world examples of how to take an idea for a children's book, create a manuscript, and know how to approach the publishing world.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Joan Scanlon McMath

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### *Intent of Dissertation: Writing and Publishing Children's Literature*

It was the intrinsic flexibility and creativity of the Interdisciplinary Program, (IIP) that first interested and inspired me to conceive of a degree that would bring together my life-long interests in art, children, and writing. My academic and professional goals being one and the same; to write and publish children's literature, melded together in this program and offered me the opportunity to prepare for a professional career in authoring and publishing children's literature.

With the incredible innovations and expansion of technology in the world of communication, I wanted to be prepared for various avenues my work might take. Accordingly, I combined course work in English, Education, and Fine Arts. My work in the College of Education included independent research into mythology and the classics as the foundation for all important meaningful literary work, as well as studying the developmental stages of the young child as a prerequisite to writing for this audience. In English, I studied creative writing and researched the historical and contemporary literature created for young international readers. The College of Fine Arts allowed me the opportunity to examine the phenomenon of how and why children's literature is increasingly being made into Hollywood films, and technical expertise in picture book illustration. Altogether, this research has provided me with a more comprehensive view, a more realistic picture of the publishing process and the tools to enter the market.

This dissertation is a compilation of the pre-writing research, authoring, and publishing histories of three manuscripts that I see as practical products of a research-based degree.

### *Questions That Guide My Research*

My dissertation research was built upon the question: If one wants to author and subsequently publish children's literature, what is the process? How might an author prepare herself to write for children?

Writing for children is not the same as writing for adults. There needs to be an understanding of the young reader; knowledge of child psychology and developmentally appropriate subject matter. Not only does one need to have a solid foundation in understanding and being able to skillfully apply traditional child psychology, but one needs to ascertain the interests and concerns of today's child. To write children's literature one must know the intended audience.

Along with understanding children, an author must be able to write stories that appeal to the young reader. In an ever-changing, technologically driven global market, we have become a diverse world community. Cullinan and Galda, (2002) state that, "All children, from all cultures and in all places, need to see books that reflect themselves and their experiences as well as allow them the opportunity to discover the lives of others" (p. 275). An author today must be sensitive to the increasing diversity of her young audience, and be willing to find out what cultural issues are pertinent to this audience.

The author must also explore and examine international children's literature in order to keep abreast of cutting-edge developments, and the entire international entertainment industry and its relationship to contemporary youth culture.

How does one go about having a manuscript published? The publishing industry changes as fast as technology. Publishing is in a constant state of transformation due to a global market and the multinational acquisitions and mergers that rule today's businesses. How does an individual author approach this Goliath of book publishers? Where does one start?

### ***Who is the Audience: Understanding the Young Child***

To market a product one must first identify the target audience/consumer, and then study that audience, and perhaps survey to assess customer demand for said product. The same process to sell a lawnmower is applicable to the producing and selling of children's literature. To know my audience of young readers, I researched child psychology and development. I hoped to find a possible relationship between developmental stages and childhood needs; the possibility that books could actually nurture the young child emotionally as well as physically.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow expressed a belief that all human beings have the same basic needs. His well respected theory states that a hierarchy of needs exists, and if the fundamental needs of shelter, food, and love are not met, a person will not be able to advance and move upward to fulfill higher needs such as self-actualization.

Author Lee Wyndham explains that good literature appeals to human emotions, and that, “Basic emotions are universal, and physical sensations are common to everyone, regardless of age or the time in which they live” (p. 65).

Not only do children share emotional development and needs, but they share a physiological development as well. In his book, *Baby and Child Care*, Benjamin Spock, M.D., emphasizes how important it is to read to infants and young children because scientists now tell us that reading, singing, and talking actually contributes to the physiological development of a child’s brain.

Dr. Spock goes on to advise, “I suggest you begin to foster in your children a love of reading and the printed word from the start. Book sharing is a wonderful way to promote language development.” (p. 467).

Dorothy Butler reiterates these facts in *Babies Need Books*, “Scientists tell us that approximately one half of a person’s ultimate intelligence is developed by the age of four, with another thirty per cent accruing by the age of eight” (p.1).

Picture books today are written primarily for pleasure. This was not always so. Originally books were meant to instruct children in either moral issues or academic pursuits. Most children’s books came to the United States from England. While first intended solely for instruction, it soon became clear that the books nurtured children’s imaginations. The greatest among the imaginative books written for pleasure, Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) was soon reprinted in English-speaking countries all over the world, (Cullinan and Galda, 2002). Further research into the classics revealed the finest writing over the past one hundred and fifty years. The classics provide

a well-deserved benchmark by which aspiring authors might evaluate their own work for not only do they engage the young reader's imagination and intellect, but the classics provide children with examples of fine writing. These authors are masters of literature and skillfully bring together scholarly elements of plot, characterization, setting and themes in their own unique way. Wyndham, remarks that what makes classics live on and on is their appeal to human emotions, their genuine portrayal of people and their feelings (p. 65). Emotions are a shared experience applicable to an international audience.

Studying children's literature led to my writing the manuscript, *Absolutely Beastly Creatures; An A to Z of Terrifying Beasts*. When young male students were consulted on this project to ascertain their interests, it became clear that monsters are in great demand.

#### ***What are Contemporary Cultural Issues in Today's Children's Book Market***

Authors Bernice Cullinan and Lee Galda explain in their book, *Literature and the Child*, that we now have a global literature where young people are able to view the experiences of those living in the midst of political turmoil and social upheaval. They can read about the emergence of alternative lifestyles. Today, a global society gives voices to groups that were historically marginalized in previous literature, such as Native Americans, Aboriginals, African Americans, Maori, Inuit, women, and children. Not only are adults such as myself writing for these international children, but the world's children are being heard.

To better prepare myself to write for an international reader, I studied Joseph Campbell's brilliant work, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1973) on the monomyth the one myth, the one story of all mankind. Campbell's study of mythology explains that

there has existed through all time and for all humanity, a story Campbell calls the Hero's Journey. In his book, *A Hero's Journey*, Campbell states that, "The myth guides you through the rituals, the initiation rites, fertility rites, puberty rites, funeral rites. These are for guiding the individual through the inevitable course of a lifetime, and the human lifetime in this manner has not changed since the time of the Auragnacian caves" (p. 61).

My work as an intervention specialist in an international elementary school provides me a unique window of opportunity to speak with and access the minds and opinions of children from more than twenty countries. Children's book publishers are increasingly looking for multicultural manuscripts. Seeing this need in the book market combined with my friendship with several Muslim students led to my research of Islam. My interest in learning about the Muslim children's lives presented an opportunity to meet Muslim families and visit their homes. I was invited to celebrate Ramadan, the most important celebration of the Islamic year.

This multicultural research led to my writing a second picture book manuscript, *The Red Scarf*, a story about two eight-year old girls, one Muslim the other non-Muslim, whose friendship allows them to transcend their cultural differences with joy and understanding.

***The Newest Genre/Media in Communicating With Kids: A Look at Graphic Novels and Film***

Creative authors and illustrators are ignoring prior constraints and convention to expand genre, age-level appropriateness, and standard formats. The genre boundaries of children's and young adult's literature are blurred Cullinan and Galda ( 2002). Picture

books used to be read exclusively by and for young children, but today we find more and more examples of picture books for older readers on topics that are definitely not appropriate for a young child. These older kids have become a generation of visual learners through their constant diet of technology. Librarians, teachers, and parents see children's preference for books with more visuals and less text.

Today's youth are more familiar with icons, photographs, graphics, and visual displays than were children of the past. Technology makes it possible to illustrate fiction and nonfiction with strong, appealing visual images, while nonfiction is lavishly illustrated and often takes the format of a photo essay Cullinan and Galda (2002). Eliza Dresang speaks of major innovations in children's literature in her book, *Radical Change* (1998). Dresang describes literature in exciting new forms and formats, words and pictures reaching new levels of synergy, nonlinear and nonsequential organization and format, with multiple layers of meaning and interactive formats. All these ideas are indicative of the technological age in which we live.

Graphic novels are the newest genre on the publishing block. Many larger publishing houses are creating niches just for graphic novels. Although graphic novels have been around for over twenty years, only now are they becoming a household word. I met and interviewed an Athens, Ohio author, Stephen Richter, who self-published his own graphic novel, *Smoog and the Eye of the Trillagryn*,<sup>1</sup> in 2005. Richter explained that the graphic novels are becoming more main-streamed and are making their way into film. I believe the research into this genre is important because as a teacher working with

special education, I see graphic novels as the future; their visual, hyper-text format appeals to the hardest to reach reluctant readers.

These are the ideas that are out there on the cutting-edge of contemporary children's literature. One can also observe this ever-increasing visual frenzy in advertising and magazine publications. Even cereal boxes and children's clothes have wild graphics. The newest textbooks for elementary students have far more bright photographs and visuals than in the past. I believe this is because publishers don't want to lose their young audiences that require visual stimulation over text. For these reasons, I investigated the multi-media illustrations of various children's authors and illustrators, in particular the work of artists like Eric Carl and Simms Taback who work in collage and multi-layered, colorful picture book illustrations.

In researching visual formats in which to communicate with children, the format of film is by far the most lucrative and pervasive. An impressive fact is that kid's movies make more money than any other genre of film. Like children's picture books, the world of film has gone through enormous changes. Even Disney films that could be counted on to provide solid magical entertainment for children, have expanded into moviemaking for older and older audiences to where you have a movie like *Pirates of the Caribbean* (2003) that would not, in my opinion, be appropriate for a four or five-year old to watch, but is rated as family entertainment. And yet, watch them they do, to the tune of billions and billions of dollars, pesos, francs, and lire.



*How does one publish children's literature*

The publishing industry has undergone significant changes and remains in a constant state of flux. As global mergers and acquisitions transform hundreds of smaller independent publishers into a few enormous multinational companies, opportunities for a new author dwindle. Publishing is a multi-billion dollar industry, with presidents and C.E.O.'s exerting tremendous control over the global book market.

Breaking into this highly competitive environment is difficult, though not impossible. In order to survive, a new author must be a savvy researcher and thoroughly study the publishing industry.

## **Chapter Two: Who is the Audience for Author's of Children Literature**

I decided that in order to write truly good books for children that I must first study the classics, the best that authors have to offer. The same is true when one wants to study painting, you begin with the masters-Rembrandt, Van Gough and others.

### *A Rationale for Children's Literary Classics*

My intent in researching children's classics was to better understand the formal qualities of literature as well as the emotional and intuitive aspects that create a classic. I found authorities in agreement those in orders to judge a book's value, its quality; we must examine such aspects as: theme, plot, setting, characters, point of view, intent, and style. We may evaluate a book according to these criteria much in the same way that an art form would be analyzed for its elements of color, shape, line, and texture. To merely like a book does not give us a formal means of evaluation that is a necessity to those who truly value children's literature and take it seriously. We want the stories we love to be able to stand up to scholarly inspection.

Albert Einstein is sometimes said to have been more of an artist/theorist than a scientist; using insight to lead him. I imagine Einstein deeply intuitive and so sensitive that intuition was indeed a primary element in his work and may have manifested as pure inspiration. Then, after "knowing" he would follow a formal scientific experiment of whatever he needed to do to satisfy the world so others might be able to follow his journey as well: not by intuition, but by elements and laws. I believe many ideas are inspirations and after we're struck with that great inspirational bolt of lightening, we have to get down to the rigorous task of writing-back to theme, plot, setting, character, point of

view, style, and so on. The story of Harry Potter came to J.K. Rowling in one inspirational train ride to London. Of course, years of work have followed, but she certainly created a classic. Federico Fellini once said that for people who live in the imagination, there is no lack of subjects. To seek the exact moment at which inspiration comes is futile. Imagination floods us with suggestions all the time, from all directions. And then the hard work of turning inspiration into the written word.

And that leads me to the other reason I wanted to study the classics: to see what we may be reading today that will become a classic. It is well known in the publishing world that editors are always on the lookout for the next classic, inspired work that will sell for one hundred years!

### *Children's Literary Classics*

The topic of my research has been “Classics” in children’s literature. My intent: to define the term classic by listening to authors, librarians, publishers, parents, and asking children their own opinions about the subject. Then with a definition of classic in hand, to investigate the selection process by which a child’s book rises to the status of classic: this pinnacle of children’s literature. Though I found few books actually titled “Children’s Classics” from which to do my research, I found many lists of classic titles. These lists were valuable as content, but they didn’t tell me why each book was chosen. For instance: how did *Treasure Island* or *Mary Poppins* become a classic? Were these books on the list from their inception or did they have to earn their way onto the list? Once on this infamous list are they guaranteed classic status forever? Will we forever read of Pooh Bear eternally hording his “huny” and Mrs Tiggywinkle endlessly ironing

her handkerchiefs? And as for new stars on the horizon: will my great-grandchildren be reading about Ron and Harry and Hermione and their adventures at Hogwarts?

From here I analyzed the Newbery and Caldecott winners to find what percentage of these titles, having been given the book industry's stamp of approval, have earned the distinction of being called a classic. One would think that the Newbery and Caldecott recipients would have a high percentage of classics among their ranks, but do they? I wanted to know.

I have found answers to my questions, but only after extensive reading. I have gleaned insight here and there and after reading what authors have said on this subject, I have come up with a clearer understanding of what makes a classic and have formed my own opinion of what contemporary works will most likely endure and be read to our children yet to be born.

My next step was to study the books that have earned the classic status. I wanted to examine them to see if they truly do have qualities in common-I expected they would, but I wanted to find out for myself.

After completing all this research and feeling like a literary critic myself, I ended my study by voting for my own choices for tomorrow's classics.

### ***Step One: Finding a Definition***

*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* gives the following definitions of the word classic: a. of recognized value; serving as a standard of excellence, b. traditional, enduring, a work of enduring excellence. This definition is a beginning, but we all know that volumes could, and have been written about our literary heritage.

So, where are these volumes? I found only a few books written solely on the subject of children's classics. However, I discovered a plethora of discussions on the topic in amongst an eclectic collection of book reviews, magazines and journals, text books, catalogs, manuals on writing for children, newspapers, and the Internet. From these conversations and snippets of book reviews I was able to draw a picture of the classic.

The following are possible explanations of what a "classic" truly is:

"A classic can be as simple as *The Princess and the Pea* or *Ferdinand*: it can be as rich, long, and epic as Pyle's *King Arthur*, or as clear and obvious as the masterly combination of Natty Bumppo stories, it can be as gently touching as Beatrix Potter's animal stories or as deeply moving as *Bambi* and *The Yearling*" (Bechtel, 1940, p. 195).

"It is equally important to balance a child's literary diet between both contemporary and classic books. The children's classics transcend time by dealing with themes that are perennially both old and new: home and family life, adventure, fancy, animals. The great stories, classics, link children with their heritage from the past and join this generation with humanity. While the contemporary literature explores and illuminates the wishes, hopes, desires, and values of the present generation oh young readers and thus relates them to their physical, social and spiritual world"(Cameron, 1969, p. 203).

"What is a classic? There is little disagreement that a really good story or a classic is a piece of writing that has achieved a place in the minds and hearts of people-

for its meaning and its beauty of style. It has stood the test of time; it has something for people of all ages no matter where they live” (Altstetter,1989, p.74).

“The changes in concepts of the classics for children have been interesting to follow. Few adults agree on its meaning. To the purist, classics are the great book works of our literary inheritance, many of them not written for children, but not to be missed by them, and preferably before they reach high school. To the less exacting, any book that lives on and is widely loved through several generations becomes a classic. For many, there is a definite corpus of children’s literature, juvenile books that are especially well written as well as adopted (or adapted) adult classics, all of them books that should count in a child’s memory” (Bechtel, 1940, p. 21).

Good literature seems to be far more open to interpretation than trash is. Its “truths” are elusive, scholars have been finding new ways of reading Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and Potter’s *Peter Rabbit* and White’s *Charolette’s Web* for a long time. In fact it’s possible that what distinguishes the most important literature is its ability to engender new interpretations from its readers. What keeps them alive and causes us to keep reading them in new ways to be continually attentive to the as-yet-unconsidered possibilities of meaning within them.

If we refer to the discussions above, we are able to create a composite definition of a “classic”. I think it can safely be said that in the broadest sense, a “classic” is a book that has risen to the top of the literary pile because it survives throughout generations and continues to be sold to an international clientele. And why does it survive? Because readers love it. As children we love these books, and as we grow-up we remember the

stories and perhaps read them to our own children or grandchildren. The classic is passed on as a family treasure....or you might say, classic are passed on from generation to generation as cultural heirlooms.

***Step Two: The Selection Process: How a Book Becomes a “Classic”***

Now that I have named and identified the subject of my study, and given some definitions of a classic, I will proceed to dissect the body of work called “classics” into parts so that it might be more thoroughly understood. I think the magic of a good book, of a classic, is far beyond logical explanation, that there is much more than meets the critic’s eyes. However, there are qualities and characteristics that can be studied.

I think most people would agree that classics are good books, and yet, not all good books become classics. So, what are the factors that figure into the equation? What plus what equals a classic?

Authorities seem to be in agreement that in order to “judge” a book’s value, its quality, we must certainly examine such aspects as: theme, plot, setting, characters, point of view, intent, and style. We may evaluate a book according to these criteria much in the same way that an art form would be analyzed for its elements of color, shape, line and texture . To merely like a book does not give us a formal means of evaluation which is a necessity to those who truly value children’s literature and take it seriously. We want the stories we love to be able to stand-up to scholarly inspection.

There are other considerations in choosing a classic. We must not forget we do live in a capitalist society and money speaks. Sales and continued demand are also criteria. Winkel and Kimmel ( 1990) say that, “Books published in this century achieve

classic designation when they continually appeal to succeeding generations of young readers. Their timeless language, characters, and storyline hit a universal responsive chord” (p.35).

Apparently we’re talking about enduring popularity. And what makes a book popular? We go back to the quality of the theme, plot, setting, characters, point of view, as possible answers. And even as we study these qualities, the best of literature may be dropped for cultural or historical reasons. According to Jordan, *Two Years Before the Mast* and *Ivanhoe* were eliminated from the recommended list and *Charolette’s Web* and *The Borrowers* were chosen as replacements. It appears the list is continually being revised and some great books like *The Hobbit* and *The Secret Garden* that were originally bypassed were later recognized.

Author Margaret Marshall (1982) believes “The author should have something original to say in the theme to stretch imagination and widen knowledge. Characters should “live” their strengths, weaknesses, credibility, conviction, inter-relation must flow from the picture built up through narration, conversation, thoughts of others and individual actions, which all contribute to a convincing and integrated portrait of a character” (p.65).

A sense of time and environment should form the basis whether the story is set in the past, present, or future. Style is made up of language, vocabulary, sentence structure. Sometimes the same writer will vary his style from one book to another, but generally there are individual clues, idiosyncrasies, patterns of thought or of words which can identify the great writers. We may recognize aspects of: gloom, evil, joy, mystery, and



illustrations that supplement the writing style as we see that J.R.R.Tolkien was an artist as well as an author and drew many illustrations for his own stories.

To the above criteria I would also add what Eleanor Cameron has named as an essential quality in the writing of children's fiction: "the dignity of story, that the writer is able to evoke the true aura of childhood through re-experiencing that emotional state he lived in as a child, a state composed of delight in the simplest, most secret, sometimes the oddest things, of sad and fears and terrors one could not or would not explain, of a continuing wonder about much that seems drab and familiar to adults" (p. 125).

A classic can be puzzling as to its obvious age interest and have defects of style, yet live and be loved for an inner quality that overrides difficulties. According to Bechtel (1940), this quality may be sheer fun or a deep spiritual sensation. In any case it will be a book that stretches both mind and heart.

**Theme:** the main idea of the story. The most effective means an author can use to further his/her theme is to weave it into the story through characters, dialogue, and events creating a seamless presentation.

The children's classics transcend time by dealing with themes that are perennially both old and new: home and family life, adventure, fantasy, animals. Leland Jordan (1976) says, "we might say that the themes of classics are readily familiar and thus comfortable to children because they have roots in the needs and concerns of the growing child; and thus of humanity" (p.79). Let's examine the themes of a few classics.

"Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents," grumbled Jo, lying on the rug.  
 "It's so dreadful to be poor!" sighed Meg, looking down at her old dress. "I don't think

it's fair for some girls to have plenty of pretty things, and other girls nothing at all," added little Amy, with an injured sniff.

We've got Father and Mother and each other," said Beth contentedly from her corner. Here, in the opening lines of *Little Women*, we see the theme of this classic: love, specifically the love and solidarity in a family, a truly fundamental need of all humanity.

In the classic, *The Runaway Bunny*, there is an underlying theme of the close relationship between mother and child, of unconditional love. This mother rabbit asserts her love and devotion by telling her child that no matter where the child runs off to, the mother rabbit will follow; she will go wherever she must to reach the child. This theme is comforting to a small child and we see again, a theme that fulfills a deep human need.

In *The World of Children's Books*, Marshall explains that great themes in story can give awareness, knowledge, and an understanding of things which in real life might be overwhelming. To many children what is real life for them is fantasy for others, depending upon their personal circumstances. It is the perspective which creates a literature for children, the angle from which the theme is viewed through the characters, via the author. Whether the themes involve world issues, morals, emotions, realistic or imaginary settings, animals, humans or objects, the angle of vision is what causes a book to catch the interest of a child, the uniting of the mind of the writer with the mind of the child.

**Setting:** the time and the place of the action. One might keep in mind that time and space/place are different in a child's mind than in an adult's mind. A child does not easily understand when 100 A.D. was or what the world looked like in that year.

However, a child can relate to a story of a young boy who is running barefooted through a muddy pasture to catch a squealing pig that has escaped its crudely made pen. The image of a boy chasing an animal is timeless. If a story takes place long ago or today, the wise author knows to create a world that a child can relate to.

The setting can explain a great deal to the child, it is, so to speak, the stage. Imaginative, creative children will want to know many details. Lee Wyndham tells wannabe children's authors that, "The reader must know what the setting is: the time, place, and social atmosphere. You must let him or her know at once if you are dealing with the present or if this is a period piece, a space opera, or some other kind of fantasy (p.98)." A reader can feel very confused if after reading half-way through the first chapter they find out the story happened fifty years ago when they had already set a contemporary setting for themselves. Setting must be clear.

In *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* we are told very early on that, "Dorothy lived in the middle of the great Kansas prairies, with Uncle Henry, who was a farmer, and aunt Em, who was the farmer's wife. Their house was small, for the lumber to build it had to be carried by wagon many miles. There were four walls, a floor and a roof, which made one room; and this room contained a rusty-looking cooking stove, a cupboard for dishes, a table, three or four chairs, and the beds. Uncle Henry and Aunt Em had a big bed in one corner and Dorothy a little bed in another corner. There was no garret at all, and no cellar-except a small hole, dug in the ground, called a cyclone cellar, where the family could go in case one of those great whirlwinds arose, mighty enough to crush any

building in its path. It was reached by a trap door in the middle of the floor, from which a ladder led down and led down into the small, dark hole.”

**Characters:** the people, animals, and fantasy creatures who live our stories. I have to say from the start that I think of all the criteria, character is the most important. When I think of the books I love, my own personal classics, my first thought is the main character or characters. The illustrations and setting probably come next for me, but it is the character of Pooh or Peter Rabbit or Bilbo Baggins that I love. I remember where they lived and how the story progressed, where the exciting moments occurred and how my character surmounted great obstacles and lived through great adventures, but what I have carried with me into my adult life and what lives with me is the soft touch of a brown Pooh Bear and his little pink pig friend. I smile remembering a little boy rabbit who did something very naughty and got caught under a fence in Mr. McGregor’s garden, tore the buttons off his new blue coat, and had to drink chamomile tea and go to bed hungry while his sisters were good and had a treat. I can also feel the touch of a very smooth, well-worn, velveteen rabbit. As I reflect on my childhood favorites I can see how even at four or five years old my deep love of animals and gentle souls was apparent. Children do love animals; real or fantastic, and many classics have animals as the main characters.

Perhaps we remember the characters so well because, as children, we can identify with these well-written, well-portrayed, protagonists. The author’s responsibility is to create characters that live. You want the characters portrayed so well through dialogue, attitudes, idiosyncrasies, habits, physical traits, that the reader, or listener, can feel what

the character is feeling and can live with the characters; be a hero finding the buried gold in a dragon's lair, or a heroine flying her plane across Africa. An author wants characters to grow and change as the story progresses. The reader enjoys seeing a character that can learn from his mistakes or one that can mature and become wiser from life lessons. A child listening to the Laura Ingles Wilder stories can vicariously "grow-up" with Laura and Mary and in a sense, the book may serve as a template for the reader; footsteps to follow along the path of life; and the characters as role models. A child might think to herself, "Laura and Mary were brave when they saw the bear; I can be brave too." Even I, as an adult while reading these books to my children, found myself living in the cabin with Ma and Pa and enjoying the beauty and simplicity of their lives. This kind of rich literature, this classic has living characters! It is the traits, the personalities of the characters that carry the plot.

"Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire: secret, and the self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shriveled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly of his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas." We all know Scrooge from *A Christmas Carol!*

“When Mary Lennox was sent to Misselthwaite Manor to live with her uncle everybody said she was the most disagreeable-looking child ever seen. It was true, too. She had a little thin face and a little thin body, thin light hair and a sour expression. Her hair was yellow, and her face was yellow because she had been born in India and had always been ill in one way or another”. *The Secret Garden’s* saucy protagonist experiences a marvelous transformation of personality.

**Plot:** what happens in the story; the beginning, middle, and end. Children like action. A story for a young child may be short on words, but it needs a continual flow of activity to hold the child’s interest. Plot seems to be born of characters; is the protagonist a curious, impetuous boy that longs for adventure and thus the story plot begins with a plan for a boy to pack his bags and take off on an adventure, maybe to a friend’s backyard and maybe to another planet, but the characters make the plot. As characters speak and carry on internal dialogue and interact with other characters, the plot moves along.

Here in Plot we also see layers to the story. A story for a very young child like *The Runaway Bunny* has a layer of child testing mother and a layer of deeper maternal love being literally willing to go anywhere to reach her child. These are simple yet deep layers. Whereas, in *The Hobbit*, someone could probably do an entire doctoral dissertation on the multi-layered plot of this incredible fairy tale. Whether simple or complex, the plot of a classic is believable and keeps the reader wanting to turn the page!

### *Step Three: The Newbery and Caldecott Study*

I told a children's librarian about my classics project and that I wanted to do a comparison study to see if the Newbery and Caldecott winners were often considered classics. The Newbery Medal is given by an awards committee of the Children's Services Division of the American Library Association to the author of the most distinguished contribution to literature for children published in the United States during the preceding year. The Caldecott Medal is the equivalent of the Newbery but is awarded to the illustrator of the most distinguished picture book. When asked, the librarian answered in the affirmative. "Oh yes" she said, "the committee might miss a few, but they almost always find them." The "them" she referred to were the best of children's literature; the stories we all know and love. And as I examined both lists I did find the majority of Newbery and Caldecott winners are indeed classics. It might seem an obvious fact, but I wanted to be certain. From this information we might be safe in assuming that the Newbery and Caldecott winners of the past thirty to forty years are all going to be classics.

But, according to Marshall (1982), the body of literature called the classics is not a once-and-for-all list of great books but a growing body, being added to continually over the years as new books are written, read and acknowledged to be works that stand the test of time. As I see the list of classics, it is literature that fills the needs of a culture, of a population. For that time and those people, the writing fits. The Nazis burned books by Einstein that were later, in another time and another culture, considered "classics" like

the shifting shores of an island, nothing that is alive ever remains static, but is forever changing. And so it is with our favorite stories.

***Step Four: What are the new “Classics”?***

Teachers are still reading the best of literature to their classes. What I see as an elementary teacher in the public schools is a reading of books like *The Westing Game*, *The Giver*, *Bridge to Taribithia* and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* as required reading. But, as for the children choosing these books to read to themselves, it doesn't happen enough. In fact, reading any kind of book, doesn't happen enough. I think many of our favorites will continue on as classics, such as books by Beatrix Potter and Maurice Sendak, but as children grow older and are choosing their own reading material, I don't see many classics by demand in the middle to older group except in the area of fantasy. And here with the older readers we have a whole literary phenomenon going on: yes, I'm referring to *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings*. *Harry Potter* is able to reach the younger audiences more readily than *Lord of the Ring* that usually appeals to an older reader.

We know that J.R.R. Tolkein was a genius and that his work has been and will always be “classic”. As to *Harry Potter*, there is a great deal of discussion and disagreement as to the literary value of J.K.Rowling's books. I have seen the real magic of the story of the orphan/wizard and I know from personal experience that if in the future the writing is judged inferior, it won't matter to readers because there is much more to *Harry Potter* than technical analysis; there's magic!

The *Harry Potter* books receive my vote for the story most likely to become an international children's literary “Classic”. Of course there are throngs of *Harry* fans who



feel the same way I do, but being literary critics we must allow for dissent and in the name of literary science, we must listen to the voice of reason, or in this case, voice of criticism. Following are comments, both positive and negative critiques of J.K.

Our first critic, Maria Nikolajeva (2001), seems to feel there is not even much literature in the world that can even be called children's literature. As I just said, I find her remarks interesting though she doesn't directly critique Harry Potter. She says that, "The notion that there is a "common" children's literature in all countries in the world is a misunderstanding. The idea of touchstones of children's literature, popular in the United States and widespread elsewhere, is ethnocentric. With very few exceptions, children's literature in different countries has little in common. Besides, these universal texts are mostly collections of retold fairy tales (Perrault, Grimms) or adapted adult novels (*Robinson Crusoe*), none of which are children's literature as such, even if for different reasons they have become part of children's reading (p.195).

She would name *Alice in Wonderland* as the only truly universal children's book. In her opinion the "so-called classics are defined as a rather heterogeneous group of texts which were not originally written for a young audience. This particular woman is very critical of all children's literature and, ironically, appears to have spent many years of her life examining the very topic! I think Nikolajeva would have to agree that at least *Harry Potter* was specifically written for young readers and does appeal to an international audience. It appears to defy her criticism.

Rowling has said herself that she has no trouble at all thinking herself back to age eleven, and the novel shows it. Here we see not only an amazing story, but the author has

that special ability to think as a child, to remember what it means to be a kid. Rowling is able to address all kinds of children's problems and pre-teen horrors.

In his book, *Sticks and Stones* (2001), author Jack Zipes, lets us know that he does not consider the Potter books to be children's literature, but that the books are in a category that purports to be literature. Zipes tells the story that at one time he was asked his opinion of the *Harry Potter* books, he said they were formulaic and sexist. Shortly after this he was asked to be on a radio show to discuss the topic. On air he found himself aggressively attacked by ninety percent of the callers (all adults) for demeaning J.K Rowling's works, which they felt had done wonders for their children and children's literature.

He says that the plots are all the same and once you've read one book you've read them all. He admits it is a fairy tale and that there is some redemption in that. But, that "unlike some postmodern and magic-realist writers who have turned fairy tales upside down and inside out to voice a certain skepticism about the original messages of conventional fairy tales and the meaning of traditional happiness it's not so with Rowling, she remains within the predictable happy-end school of fairy-tale writers, because you know from the beginning that Harry will triumph over evil, and this again may be one of the reasons that her novels have achieved so much popularity"(p.92).

Another more recent article by Nancy Gibbs appeared in the June 23, 2003 issue of *Time magazine*. In the article: "The Real Magic of Harry Potter", Gibbs writes about the Potter books and believes that maybe their book's popularity is due to the fact that young readers see themselves in the character of Harry Potter. Or maybe the reason

Rowling's books are the most popular children's series ever written is because Rowling addresses children as though they know as much as or more than she does about the things that matter. Gibbs believes that Rowling gets everything right, and writes as though she knows what it is to be thirteen years old. She mentions staggering statistics: the books are in 200 countries, in 55 languages, in Braille, in 200 million volumes, 8.5 million copies of the newest book is the largest first printing ever, and at 900 pages is the largest children's book ever printed. To this, she also tells us that J.K. is now wealthier than the Queen of England!

I believe that the written language elicits an internal dialogue within the reader. My theory is that the creative child, or adult for that matter, is able to bring characters to life in their own, inner world. It is here, in the reader's mind and imagination that the child gives life to the characters and the reader truly lives the story.

True art has life in it; be it a book, a painting, a piece of music. There are some books with words that lay flat on the page and forever remain black ink stamped upon white paper—that's all! Then, there are other books, other words, that are imbued with life. I call this, "literary magic." I would say the author brings life to the words, and the reader brings the words to life. This is not a conscious act. Indeed, the reader is busy with the act of decoding and encoding language, of understanding new vocabulary, and keeping track of characters and names and remembering who did what when and where. But, as these mental facilities are busy, the magic happens in the child's mind. Because a part of the child is there, in the story, with the characters. What else is this but magic? It's imagination for certain, but what is imagination? In my work with children I have

come to believe there is a direct link between imagination and intelligence. This is a subject for further study. But, suffice it to say for now, that from my observations, the muggles I know who don't like, or who aren't interested in fantasy, like *Harry Potter* or *The Hobbit*, are usually boring, uncreative, unimaginative people. In my words, they just can't go there.

### *A Rationale for The Nurturing Nature of Children's Literature*

My intent in researching the nurturing characteristics of children's literature was an attempt to analyze the psychological and emotional relationship between young children and books. I wanted to find out if literature is capable of actually fulfilling some of the basic human needs fundamental to healthy human development. Again, I was dissecting children's literature to know it better, in order to be a better writer.

In the world of business everyone knows that a necessary prerequisite to selling a new product is to know your market: are there products like yours already out there successfully being sold? Who will buy your product? Is there a real need for your gadget? Does your product have a unique aspect to it that will make it stand out from the rest? Publishing books is a business, a huge business. For me, understanding my young audience is understanding my market. Editors and agents always stress that writers must know their readers. A writer has to know the difference between writing a short rhyme of twenty words for a board book that will make a two-year old laugh, and writing a 200-word picture book manuscript a four-year old finds satisfying.

With this research I studied the emotional, mental, and physical developmental stages of a child's first six years. Along with my previous knowledge and work

experience, this study provided me with a solid foundation from which to write for children. It provided further knowledge of my intended audience: the child.

***Children's Literature: The Nurturing Nature of Early Childhood Literature***

One of my earliest memories is of myself as a four or five year old, sitting on the floor with an even younger child on my lap and reading *little golden* books together. I have kept involved with books, children, and literature all my life. It was out of these two passions that this research project was born.

I have always held a belief that all children have basic human needs that transcend socio-economic strata and cross cultural boundaries. The more needs met, the healthier the child. And woe to the world full of adults where these basic needs are not met. The cost most likely will be loss to the individual of never having reached their full potential, and a loss to society because it will never benefit from the gifts and talents that child might have been able to develop and offer the world had they been cared for and nurtured to the fullest degree possible. I feel strongly that these needs must be met.

What do human needs have to do with literature? For many years I have heard vague insinuations and claims that parental communication with an infant or toddler could actually increase a child's vocabulary as well as her intelligence. This idea sounded reasonable to me. I also believed the theory that reading to a child from birth could contribute to her general well-being. Thinking about the importance of literature in the life of a developing child, I began to wonder if literature could actually fill some of these human needs. Thus the title: *The Nurturing Nature of Early Childhood Literature*.

First, what are the basic human needs of a child? What is necessary for healthy development physically, mentally, and emotionally? With these needs in mind, I scoured the field of children's literature for books that have intrinsic nurturing qualities with the potential to actually fill one or more of these needs.

I limited my research to studying only children from birth to age five. Then, I gleaned some of my findings from other authors as well as from other parents and children. I always think it is important to include children in studies of children. Who knows better what they think and feel and need than they do themselves? With more than four thousand children's books published annually by some 160 publishers, I searched for quality over quantity. I wanted books with intrinsic comfort; for books that nourish a child's developing mind as much as warm bread and milk do. I wanted to be able to tell a parent, "This book can help your child to grow."

With of teaching experience in the Athens public school as an intervention specialist. For this research I was able to add my own observations of children who were deprived of all that we know to be necessary for proper human development in the first years of life. Abandoned to orphanages in Russia and Romania, the environment these children lived in for their first three to four years ranged from neglect at best to outright abuse in some cases. I have spent a great deal of time with these children and I have seen what has happened to the children who did not receive nurturing from any source whatsoever!

### ***What the Scientists Are Telling Us***

I am at times skeptical of technology and sometimes cynical as to the directive

implications it has for our lives. Perhaps like most things in life, moderation is the key even with computers and camera/phones and gigantic televisions. Much of these toys I think are unnecessary. However, when technology teams up with science and medicine some pretty remarkable discoveries are possible. The fact that technicians can examine the contents of our brains and follow the paths of our nervous systems is nothing short of miraculous.

The idea that a human's brain was complete and unalterable at birth, though once a scientific certainty, is now passé, old news. Neurobiologists tell us with assurance, offering evidence gathered through magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and other techniques, that early childhood experiences determine physically how the intricate neural circuits of the brain are wired, (Butler, 1998). This is exciting! We see now that although an infant's brain and neurological systems are in place at birth, they are incomplete. The human being at birth is a wondrous creation, but the creation is not finished. The infant we hold in our arms is a work in progress. The development and refining of a human nervous systems continues for years. And those who love and care for the child have lately been handed several new tools to help them build the healthiest, happiest child possible. It is an awesome task that we can actually contribute to the formation of our child's brain.

In the womb the small human being was stimulated; she could hear muffled sounds, see subdued light, taste substances passed through the placenta, feel the warmth of the amniotic fluid, and suck her thumb. She was in some way interacting with her world.

After birth, the interactions are more pronounced, and sometimes overwhelming. But all babies must have interaction to grow, and hopefully these exchanges between baby and adult are loving encounters.

A child's brain grows most rapidly in the first three to four years of life, and will reach two thirds to three fourths of its adult size during this period. Recent research reveals that vital interactions with caregivers literally wire a baby's brain, filling in the broad outlines of her genetic blueprint (Greenspan, 1999). As I have witnessed in my teaching, to have good genes is not enough to produce a good human being. A farmer might take the best seed from his finest crop and place it in the ground. That's a start. If the sun does not shine and warm the seed, if the rain does not fall and water the seed, if the wind does not blow and woe the seed, it will not grow. Nature is important, but nurture is everything.

Why Books? Why indeed? As stated above, children require interaction and stimulation to grow and develop into healthy adults. Communication is critical. Where there is love communication flows freely; coo's and ahhh's, tickles, and long warm hugs, smiling faces and loving voices greet the infant in her waking hours. Parents and child are communicating. Books can play a major part in this process. Butler (1998) tells us that because by their very nature books are rooted in language, and because language is essential to human communication, and communication is the blood of relationships, books matter! I agree with Butler that involvement with books from babyhood is one of the greatest blessings and benefits that can come to any child. In her book, *Early*



*Childhood Literature*, Eileen Burke states that “young children have a number of critical needs that books and stories can help meet”(p.56).

In this day and age our American society is obsessed with the acquisition of academic skills and childhood achievement to the extent that hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent on testing and diagnostic materials. States like Ohio are developing government mandated curriculum that will be taught and tested. Creativity and imagination have been forced to a far-back seat, and have been replaced by, “teaching to the test.” It’s very wrong, very backwards. The children and their needs are being side-stepped by financially savvy politicians and businessmen. Butler (1998) writes that, one thing is certain; nourishing children’s minds is infinitely more important than evaluating their progress- which we cannot do with any reliability, anyway.

In all this chaos, our society is either irresponsibly ignorant or choosing to avoid the fact that the most important years of a child’s life are the earliest, birth to five. I say this almost daily to myself as a mantra, but no one is listening. The schools are sent damaged children and the schools, meaning teachers, are supposed to not only fix the children, but to teach them. It’s often too late. As the intervention specialist in my school, I see the worst of the neglect, the children who have never been read to, who have no idea what an “a” sounds or looks like, children who have never heard a nursery rhyme or know Peter Rabbit. You wonder if the parents have given over the raising of their children to the television and computer. As pitiful as that sounds, it’s not so far from the truth for some families. According to Paul Kropp, author of *Raising a Reader* (2000,) a growing body of research indicates that a child who watches more than three hours of TV

a day will suffer problems in reading, at school, and in social development. Too much TV will interfere with intellectual development. T. Berry Brazelton (1992), a noted American pediatrician with more than thirty years of experience, warns parents that television is exhausting to a small child and that they often need comforting after watching TV. He advises that no child should watch longer than a thirty-minute periods. For some children that may even be too much. When parents use a television as a babysitter, they must realize that the programs are assaulting all the child's senses, and that there is a dear price to pay.

It is my own opinion that children should have extremely limited access to technology of all forms until they are through these early formative years. Here again, no one seems to be listening. We are not only a nation of sheep, but even more so, we are a nation of consumers. If quietly sitting with a child and reading to them made money for someone, it would be practiced a lot more.

The point here is that even if business, government, law-makers, and schools aren't going to recognize and honor the early years of childhood as the most critical to child development and to learning, I want parents to have the facts and to be accountable. A child's brain grows most rapidly in the first three to four years of life. Books are nourishment for the growing mind. Scientist are telling us that language is the most important tool for learning. Talk to your children, sing to them, play with them, whisper to them, giggle with them, but read, read, read!

### *Basic Needs of the Human Child*

Of the human needs we are aware of and able to verbalize are: the need to love and be loved, the need for security, the need to belong, the need to achieve, the need to change, the need to know, the need for beauty and order (Sutherland, 1991). And to these of course are the bare essentials in the need hierarchy to eat, sleep, and carry on our bodily functions.

A newborn sleeps most of her day and night, waking periodically to eat. Her needs are basic but essential if she is to live. She will need food, to have her diaper changed, and to be comforted when she cries. A baby also need to be kept warm because her internal temperature control isn't fully mature until the end of the first year. These may seem like mundane operations, but many specialist warn us to tend carefully to the needs in these first six to seven months as the child is learning trust and the basic foundation of a child's personality is being formed in these earliest interchanges with caregivers.

New parents may need permission to feel free enough and encouragement to see that play with a baby is just as important to her as are the more sober forms of care; her clean diapers and food.

I have found that physicians and scientist substantiate my belief that basic childhood needs are universal human needs. Brazelton's (1992), work of three decades has been built on the assertion that children experience predictable times that occur just before a surge of rapid growth in any line of development-motor, cognitive, or emotional-

when, for a short time, the child's behavior falls apart. These touch points, he asserts, are universal!

Not only are the needs of infants universal, but the sounds of communication between parent and child are nearly the same all over the world. Orme (2001) tells us that for the first few months of life, we communicate largely with cries-cries for different reasons, often of different kinds. Hunger, cold, wind, boredom, or need for contact, all are expressed by cries. Yet, from the moment we are born, we are spoken to. We listen, and after about two months we start to copy what we hear. We still cry but we experiment with sociable babbling and cooing. We do this all over the world, and there is little to distinguish the sounds we make from one country or language to another.

During the first two years of life, all children also demonstrate need to establish a strong attachment to one or more humans. They need love. Your loving smiles, sounds, and tender moments not only teach your baby to look, listen, and love; they also enable connections to form between neurons in the parts of her brain that support intelligence and social skills. Your soothing touch not only fosters your baby's ability to feel close and intimate with you, but also releases growth hormones that enable her body and brain to grow, Greenspan (1999). Pioneering studies by Nobel Prize-winners Torsten Wiesel and David Hubel on critical phases in early brain development suggest that providing your infant with opportunities to look and use his vision during certain early periods is necessary if he is to comprehend his world, and will also reduce the likelihood of his developing visual learning problems. Brazelton (1992), explains that getting a baby fed is only half of the job. Learning to communicate with the baby-touching, holding,

rocking, talking, and learning to synchronize with the baby's behavior-are as important as getting him fed!

Books are as essential part of communicating with your child, and even babies need undivided attention every day, many times a day, so that a shared language can fully unfold.

### ***Books For Babies***

Ideally, a small pile of good books awaits the new baby's arrival, (Butler, 1998). As early as possible, begin to show your infant the bright colors and simple shapes of early books. Scientist don't know why, but when infants are shown colors like red, blue and yellow, they focus the longest on red. Physicians tell us that by the age of seven months, a baby has full color vision. You want the early books to have clear, simple pictures and some text because it is to the baby's advantage to have early exposure to print, both to see and to hear.

Books are helping the baby develop visual acuity. The child is not able to reach out yet and grab the books, so you are safe using more expensive beautiful books that will be out-of-bounds in a few months time. Babies do have a real, non-eating need to suck. Physicians reassure us that pacifiers cause no physical or psychological problems. So, you might find one handy when baby begins to suck on the book you want to show him. Another authority on child development, Fitzhugh Dodson, advise is along similar lines. He says that the first books should be of cloth or heavy cardboard, and that these will consist of pictures with some simple words of familiar objects. He tells a parent to show your child the pictures and say the word out loud to him. Then, he will probably

want to handle the book himself. He may pat and stroke the pages a bit, and then into the mouth it goes! Later, he will look at the pages and croon a few nonsense syllables over the book. Authors agree that this baby babbling is indeed very early “reading”. And parents should not underestimate the importance of what is happening. He is becoming familiar with books and laying a foundation for developing a love of reading and literacy later.

The idea of reading begins before the age of one. A child understands the idea of a book even before she can say the word. The American academy of Pediatrics tells us that an infant is most attentive to black-and-white pictures or high contrast patterns, such as sharply contrasting stripes, bull’s-eyes, checks, and very simple faces. One of the favorite authors for babies is Dick Bruna, a Dutchman, whose books are very simple illustrations like a red and green apple on a white page outlines in black.

Another piece of good advice is to begin picking out board books that you are sure will stand up to repeated use. Board books come in many sizes and shapes. Helen Oxbury’s baby board books are recommended as fun for baby and parent. Winnie-the-Pooh and Beatrix Potter stories have also been made into board books.

A fun thing to do is to take books into the bathtub and with the puffy, plastic little books like *Soft Spots* by Eric Hill, and soft books by Dick Bruna, the baby can begin to play with her books.

You may want to add alphabet, counting, color, and noise books. These early books are not meant to instruct, but to introduce sounds and visual stimuli. Marilyn Segal (1998), author of *Your Child at Play*, advises us that at eight month, babies should be

exposed to a variety of books: books with one picture on each page so she can learn new words, books with more detailed pictures so she can search for a special friend or favorite object, and books with short rhymes that accompany the pictures. Activity books like *Pat The Bunny* and *Telephone* are perennial favorites.

Butler (1998), explains that nursery rhymes are often neglected today, but that they are part of our children's heritage. These songs and rhymes have been passed down from generation to generation. Nicholas Orme (2001), in his book *Medieval Children*, tells us the children's literature in The Middle Ages began in the cradle, with the songs sung by their mothers, nurses, and rockers. Children love rhymes and songs, and they are paving the way for a love of poetry. Butler says that patterns are being laid down into which every sort of later literary and musical experience will fit.

### ***Books for the First Year***

*Welcome, Little Baby* by Aliko

*B is for Bear, I Can Count I Can Count, Let's Go, Let's Make A Noise*, by Dick Bruna

*ABC of Things, Bang and Shout, Boo Baby Boo* by Helen Oxenbury

*123 How Many Animals Can you See?* By Emilie Boon

*Ten, Nine, Eight* by Molly Bang

*Gobble, Growl, Grunt* by Peter Spier

*Round and Round the Garden* by Sarah Williams

*The Helen Oxenbury Book of Nursery Rhymes*

### ***Needs of The One Year Old***

As the child grows from a baby into a toddler, her needs grow as well. The basics

of needing food, shelter, and love remain constant, but the one year old needs more. The toddler has need of emotional support, discipline, intellectual challenges, as well as a need to belong, a need to achieve and to belong, a need for beauty, order, and harmony.

Penelope Leach (1989), an expert in child development, describes the one year old as a young toddler that is no longer a baby feeling himself as part of you, but not yet the child she will become who will see you and she are different people. The toddler needs to become a person in her own right but also feels safe to remain your possession. She needs your love and approval but her drive to grow up will not allow her to accept them at the price of too much dependence. There is an interest in doing what big people do.

### ***Books For The One Year Old***

Reading specialists tell us that reading is more of an attitude rather than a set of skills. In his opinion, the one year old who wants to eat her cloth book about bears is busy exploring the world of print. Eating for a baby is part of her process of understanding the world. To understand the idea of “book”, she must eat it, tear it, crunch it, and ignore it- all at the same time she learns that a book is something to be encountered visually. Keep lots of book within reach for the toddler. She will want to hold her own books, carry them around, and even read them to you or to herself. Here again you want sturdy books.

Butler notes in her book, *Babies Need Books (1989)*, that it is natural for some parents to be apprehensive about allowing the toddler such free access to books. If books have featured in their own lives as objects to be handled with great care, as expensive, luxury items rather than as everyday necessities, they may find it almost impossible to



leave them lying around where the baby can get them. Butler advises parents to make a connection in their minds between books and food. All parents know that children need nourishing food if their bodies are to grow lithe and healthy. They know that older babies and toddlers must start to feed themselves and that this will certainly lead to messiness, waste of food, and even damage to property. None the less, they allow the child to learn; to embark on the bumbling practice which will lead to that dexterity with knife, fork and spoon which our society expects and demands. Books are essential for the developing mind as cereal and vegetables are for the growing body. In an environment where books are valued and used, competence is achieved early.

One author estimated that a child's favorite book might be read as many as three hundred times before the child tired of it and traded it for another. A child will love having their own books.

With early reading do not hesitate to read longer text to your toddler. Modern research shows that children who are exposed to complex speech patterns learn to express themselves earlier and more fluently than those who are spoken to in a careful, simple sentences. Children in their second year will want wordier books. They will listen a little longer and they may have more to say about their books.

During this second year of life children enjoy theme books as opposed to story book. Butler explains that stories, for any age, have narrative; the characters are established, and then the action begins. There is a plot with some kind of climax and resolution, and it is necessary for the reader to carry the action step by step in the mind as the tale unfolds. This requires considerable mind expertise. Theme books are less

demanding, but are a step ahead of naming books. A theme book depicts objects, activities and situations which are connected in some way.

Bedtime stories and lullabies often become a very important ritual to a toddler. The practice of singing lullabies is ancient. The Romans used the name *lalla* for a song to send a child to sleep, and a verb *lallare* meaning ‘to sing such a song’.

### ***Books For The One Year Old***

*The Baby's Catalog* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg

*Aren't You Lucky?* by Catherine Anholt

*Busy Monkey, Enormous Elephant, Roaring Lion, Tall, Tall Giraffe* by Emilie Bolam

*My Day* by Rod Campbell

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle

*Bathwater's Hot* by Shirley Hughes

*Each Peach Pear Plum* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg

### ***Needs of the Two Year Old***

This is an enormously rapid time of growth for your child. Two year olds have learned more in volume since birth than they will ever learn again in any two year period. The spurt toward independence carries with it a kind of energy for exploration and for learning about the world that is truly remarkable. The term “terrible twos” is a frustration voiced by parents of the child who decides to say, “no” to everything. Negativism is uppermost now, but it is a natural outcome of the child’s growth towards autonomy.

The two year old needs routine in his daily life and for parents to set safe limits. They will need choices that will provide a sense of control over his small world, and a

sense of competency and self-esteem. Problem-solving and mastery of skills will be his major agenda for this year. Your child truly wants to learn. Books can provide an infinite source of information for your curious two year old. Be sure to have a library card now and to make weekly visits the local library.

This is also a time when play and fantasy emerge in earnest. Fantasy play in a toddler reveals her ability to take in and conceptualize the behavior and the meaning of the events around her. It is evidence not only of cognitive competence but also of a kind of emotional freedom. There is an expanding curiosity and amazing verbal growth.

The two year-old's increased ability to make associations and remember past events, gives her the ability to classify objects. Books on these subjects will be immensely appreciated. A two year old will be using sentences with verbs and is beginning to use adjectives and adverbs. Dialogue with parents gives her a chance to model adult speech. Again, books are essential to vocabulary acquisition, as well as to communication of all sorts; singing, dancing, finger puppets, stories, plays, rhymes, fairy tales.

### ***Books For The Two Year Old***

*Ahhh! Said Stork* by Gerald Rose

*Alfie's Feet* by Shirley Hughes

*The Animal Fair* by Jill Bennet

*Appley Dapply's Nursery Rhymes, The Tale of Peter Rabbit,*

*The Tale of Mr. Jeremy Fisher, The Tale of Tom Kitten, Cecily Parsley's Nursery Rhymes* by Beatrix Potter

*Are You There, Bear?* By Ron Maris

*Big Wheels* by Anne Rockwell

*Bye Bye Baby* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg

*Come Back Puppies* by Janet Ormerod

*Harry the Dirty Dog* by Jean Zion

*A Very Busy Spider* by Eric Carle

### ***Needs of the Three Year Old***

The three year old is calmer compared to a few months ago. This child can do much more for himself and his new independence is critical to a child's development of a good self-image. Parents need to respect the child's need for autonomy, and let him try new skills.

The child's world is expanding and with this may come fears. Attentive parents who are daily communicating with their child can talk about fears and help the three year old differentiate between imagined and real. Fear of a doctor's office might be eased with a story about a parent's experience as a child in the hospital or with a doctor. Books can be very helpful now when a child's own experiences are limited, but imagined fears are real.

Butler (1998), feels this is a suitable time to introduce the first fairy stories. The three year old seems to accept the 'otherworld' quality of these earliest tales, the 'Beast Tales' as they have been called. She suggests to start with *The Three Little Pigs*, *Little Red Ridding Hood*, and *The Three Bears*; they have in common features which render them suitable for the child whose contact with stories has so far been confined to simple, progressive narratives and straightforward cause-and-effect tales. Beast tales help a three

year old move into an imaginary world which is quite unlike their own, but whose qualities are universal. The characters are often in trouble, but the child learns that they will emerge unharmed if they are courageous and wise. Many authors agree with the idea that children need to be offered books of fantasy and stories of other children overcoming obstacles. In the early fairy tales the honest motives of the characters are relatable for the child. The more sophisticated tales like *Snow White* can wait until the child has more life experience. The evil in these stories is sensed but not understood ;and the unknown is always more frightening than the known terror.

Poetry is also important to introduce now. Poetry at this stage means rhyme, jingle, and lullaby – or any suitable song. A parent should not ignore poetry because they were not exposed to it as a young child. It is too valuable to miss.

### ***Books For The Three Year Old***

*Babies Babies Babies* by Tess Dahl

*Cars and Trucks and Things That Go* by Richard Scarry

*Corduroy* by Don Freeman

*Farm Alphabet Book* by Jane Miller

*Poems and Pictures For Young Children* by Jill Bennet

*Oh Little Jack* by Inga Moore

*Our Cat Flossy* by Ruth Brown

*Peter's Chair* by Ezra Jack Keats

### *Needs Of The Four Year Old*

Four year olds have found a new sense of confidence. Confrontations are unavoidable as your child is as sure that she can look after herself as you are as certain that she still needs supervision. They are making great strides in skills. A jacket they could not fasten a week ago is suddenly zipped in a flash. This child is now beginning to see things from other's point of view. This quality is in its infancy but it is wise to discuss feeling and opinions with your four year old. You may note an increase in you child's verbal feistiness around her fourth birthday. Because she's thinking more logically now, she's more willing to challenge your authority. Helping your child express herself and put words to her feelings will have lifelong benefits. Debates are healthy and having a child verbalize her reasons and even excuses will help build her confidence as well as her verbal skills.

It has been found that during this period your child's brain experiences a growth spurt and metabolizes glucose at twice the adult rate with her brain more active than an adult's (as measured by EEG recordings). This activity occurs in two important language areas of the brain which are involved in the creation of words and the comprehension of other people's words.

Children at four have an interest in realism. They want to know who is doing what and when and why. Reading about how other children face hardships, loneliness, make new friends, and other difficult situations are important.

They will also continue to love their old favorites while needing longer, more complex stories. A well-read four year old will be ready for some of the classics. The

introduction of Babar and Grimm and Anderson fairy stories initiates the child into the realm of literature that has been shared by children for generations. Some authors advise us that between four and five is also the time to introduce an occasional book without text. Children now have the attention span and vocabulary to bring expression to their own logic and imagination. Your preschooler's vocabulary will have expanded to around 1,5000 words by now, and it will grow by another 1,000 or so over the next year. She can now elaborate stories using relatively complex sentences of up to eight words. She can tell you about reality as well as about her dreams and fantasies. It is also a time to delve deeper into poetry.

### ***Books For The Four Year Old***

*Grimm and Anderson Fairy Stories*

*The Story of Babar, Babar's Travels* by Jean de Brunhoff

*Nursery Tales* by Tomie de Paola

*The Snow Lady* by Shirley Hughes

*Katie Morag McColl stories* by Mairi Hedderwick

Morris's Disappearing Bag, Noisy Nora by Rosemary Wells

Madeline books by Ludwig Bemelman

*Badger's Parting Gifts* by Susan Varley

*Golden Treasury of Poetry* by Louis Untermeyer

*Poems for the Very Young* by Michael Rosen

*The Young Puffin Book of Verse*

### *Needs Of The Five Year Old*

For the most part five year olds are calmer than four year olds. This is true in the sense that they are now more competent and even bossy at home. But the challenges this year brings your child are immense in a social sense. For most children this is the year they begin to attend school. Preschool was fun, but according to Butler (1998), school-starters enter a huge, bureaucratic organization which will seem to possess them for an imaginable period of time. The five year old who felt big at home may feel very small at school. This is a year of adjustments and parents need to be sensitive to their child's individual needs and concerns, fears and joys.

Quiet story times with your child give both parent and child a time to enjoy the continuity of reading together, and to partake in the intrinsic comfort of books. In our family, we would sometimes say our children, "needed to have their emotional tanks filled up" after they had an especially difficult day or experience.

Five year olds want to be acceptable, and are now prey to painful embarrassment when things get out of hand. Their growing understanding of the way things should be done is in strong contrast to their capacity for accomplishment. We can't know what lies ahead for our children, but we can be sure that qualities of originality, flexibility, and good humor have always helped human beings to lead good lives. With continued closeness and attention to our children, books can be constant, comforting friends.

Your four or five year old may want to learn to read, but most experts agree that preschool or even kindergarten is not the time to teach a child to read. Certainly it is never a good idea to force a child into reading. It will usually take another year or two for



the child to develop the language skills, visual perception, and memory he needs to begin formal reading. It is a fact that most early readers lose their advantage over other children during the second and third grade, when the other children acquire the same basic skills. Again, experts seem to agree that success in school does not depend upon how much a child was pushed early on, but rather his own enthusiasm for learning.

***Books For The Five Year Old***

*Alex and the Baby, Alex and Roy, Keeping Up With Teddy* by Mary Dickinson

*All The Better To See You* by Margaret Wild

*Angelo* by Quentin Blake

*Aunnt Nina's Goodnight* by Alike

*The Jolly Postman* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg

*Doctor De Soto* by Willian Steig

*The Minpins* by Roald Dahl

*The Fairy Tale Treasury* by Virginia Haviland

*The Tomten* by Astrid Lindgrid

Twenty-four years ago I began reading books to my own baby. My thinking at the time was that if I could offer my daughter an extensive vocabulary and enrich her mind with literature and a passion for the English language, that I would be giving her a head start in life. So we read and played, sang songs, acted out stories, and shared the comfort of familiar nursery rhymes. By three years old, Jessie was impressing grandparents with animated stories of her own creation. These sometimes lengthy sessions were often a literary hybrid; something like a cross between Grimms fairy takes and the world

according to Jessie. I can honestly say that her vocabulary surpasses mine, and her writing I would judge to be superior to ninety percent of her peers. Yes, I am a proud parent, but I can say that I concur with everything I have now read in researching this paper; that a child's brain, as well as her mind, requires a great deal of adult love, involvement, and extensive, ever-present exposure to the English language in a myriad of forms. Be it books, plays, nursery rhymes, songs, poetry, music, or just a loved ones voice, we must speak and sing and touch our children. There really is no choice for those who care for children. They need our love. They need us to read to them.

***Children's Literature: Manuscript: Absolutely Beastly Creatures: An A to Z of  
Terrifying Monsters***

I wrote an informational picture book for my students, ages six to eleven. A criteria for the book was to first research the market to make sure I was writing a book that children would be interested in. My initial thought was to write a how-to instructional manual on weaving rag rugs. I was an expert on the topic and I thought it might be interesting because it involved a current cultural interest-recycling. I asked my group of twelve reluctant readers if they would rather read about rag rugs or monsters. Of course, the vote was twelve to nothing. Why did I ever think they'd want to read about rugs? This was lesson one; know what kids are interested in, do not guess.

So, with a ten-year-old expert in the field of monsters and beasts, I began to research. Kids know facts about vampires and werewolves. My young expert explained the differences between the undead and the really dead. I quickly realized that kids take this information very seriously. This was lesson two; I was not allowed to make mistakes.

If I did, I was corrected immediately. I continually asked for the student's opinions. The finished manuscript included facts about terrifying creatures; their origins, their preferred habitat, their appearance, their danger rating, and more. I wanted the manuscript to be a serious study of a fun topic. I call it "factual fiction." Encouraged to publish the book, I expanded the text and began submitting it to publishers.

*Manuscript: Absolutely Beastly Creatures*

*Almas*

A.K.A.: ... "Wildman of Russia"

Origin: The Ancient World. From the beginning of time humans have told stories about the giant, "hairy men" of the mountains.

Current Location: They prefer the highest peaks of the Ural Mountains of western Russia. However, the melting glaciers of the Urals are forcing the creatures to live at lower altitudes where they are more susceptible to human pollution and observation.

Preferred Habitat: Places humans seldom travel; frozen caves and hidden mountain valleys with harsh, extreme weather conditions.

Appearance: Reports describe the Almas as an enormous, upright mammal standing eight to ten feet tall, entirely covered with thick, dark brown hair, and having long arms that swing along its body when it runs. And it runs fast! The seldom-seen young Almas is covered with a soft, golden fuzz that molts and is replaced with the dark adult hair. This process is like the fuzz to feather transformation of the juvenile King Penguins of the Antarctic.

Diet: Omnivore that eats the raw flesh of small animals and fish, and forages for grasses

and berries.

Danger Rating: Moderate. They are huge, strong, quiet beasts that would rather be left alone, but if angered, the Almas will fight a brutal battle.

Footnote: Scientist believe the Almas is related to the Yeti of the Himalayan Mountains, to Bigfoot of the Pacific Northwest of North America, and to Sasquatch of the Canadian Wilderness. Over the past three hundred years there have been sporadic sightings of Russian “Wildwomen”, which leads scientist to believe there are “Wildbabies,” and that the Almas population is increasing.

F.Y.I.: Groups of Almas, called A-pods, have been heard singing together when their bellows and screams echo through the mountains. One sherpa swears he came upon an Almas family singing around a campfire.

### **Basilisk**

A.K.A.: “Basileus” means king in Greek. The Roman historian, Pliny the Elder, wrote about the Basilisk in 50 A.D. calling it, “A small but lethal snake.” It may also be known by the name, “Cockatrice”, though the cockatrice is not actually the same creature.

Origin: Earliest sightings dated 2,500 B.C. in Babylon along the Euphrates River.

They were later known to inhabit the region of Thessaly, in Greece. According to ancient legend the first Basilisk was created from a seven-year-old cock that laid a yolkless, spherical egg on a dung heap. The egg was then hatched by a gigantic, red, spotted toad. Yuck!

Current Location: The last official sighting was in 1784 in the Carpathian Mountains of

eastern Europe. Zoologists list the Basilisk as an endangered creature, and refuse to reveal its whereabouts.

**Preferred Habitat:** Some basilisks prefer warmer climates and originated in Cyrenaica or the Libyan Desert. Other basilisks choose the world's highest, craggiest, most treacherous mountaintops. After mating, a pair of mountain basilisks builds a gigantic nest of tree limbs held together with mud and lined with moss and rabbit fur. This nest is home, and although this winged creature may fly half-way round the earth in one night, they come home to their mountaintop rooks every morning to share their night's catch.

**Appearance:** A seething, venom-spitting, lizard-like beast that looks like a dragon when it rears up to attack. It is related to the iguana, and has a reputation for running upright on its hind legs at great speeds. Though the Basilisk is not a large creature, perhaps two to three feet tall, its agility and ability to surprise its prey, has always caused terror in the hearts of men. It has the head and wings of a giant rooster, the body of a snake, and a three-pointed serpent's tail.

**Diet:** Carnivore that eats any warm-blooded mammal. Its razor-sharp beak slashes flesh into tiny bits. Like a chicken, the Basilisk has to swallow gravel and rocks to grind up food in its enormous gullet.

**Danger Rating:** Extremely High. Not only can this beast turn you to stone with a glance from its enormous, burning eyes, but their fiery breath can leave you crispy! The sight of this beast is fatal to humans and all animals, except the weasel. Your only defense against a Basilisk is to hold a mirror in such a way that the monster dies from the

horror of its own lethal gaze.

Footnote: A Basilisk is always vicious. Because it can kill with its breath, or even its stare, this beast must be observed from a safe distance. If you've gotten close enough to see it has red hair and yellow eyes, you're dead!

F.Y.I.: If you yell at a basilisk, "Your father was a chicken and your mother was a toad," it will charge and you can quickly flash a mirror in its face.

### **Centaur**

A.K.A.: "Centaur"... Greek, means-"those who round up bulls."

Origin: Earliest known tales were from Babylon 2,000 B.C. said to be the offspring of King Ixion and a cloud. Early drawings of centaurs with wings and two tails date from 1250 B.C. Originally they lived throughout Europe and the Far East, but eventually they inhabited warmer lands all over the earth.

Current Location: Mountainous islands in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Preferred Habitat: They live exclusively in warm climates as they have no fur, and they like living near grape vineyards. They long to return to the coastal mountains of Thessaly in northern Greece, but that region is too populated now.

Appearance: Half-human, half-horse. Only some centaurs have wings, most do not. They have the head and upper body of a man and the lower body of a warhorse, making these beasts stronger than any man or horse. An average centaur is seven feet tall from hoof to head, although there are stories of an ancient breed of massive centaurs that were, "the size of the biggest giant with the strength of one hundred men." These super centaurs died out during the Middle Ages when knights took up the quest of

riding the world of beasts and menacing creatures.

Diet: Omnivore who feasts and parties like a human. They especially love to eat raw meat, and drink fermented beverages.

Danger Rating: Moderate, as so few now live anywhere near civilization. In the past they were much feared because they roamed in wild, savage herds fighting and destroying everything in their path. The centaur, Chiron, was an exception and chose a peaceful path and applied his skills in warfare and music to higher goals and to instruct great leaders such as, Alexander the Great, Achilles, and Hercules. To honor Chiron, he was placed in the night sky as the constellation Centaurus.

Footnote: According to legends, the centaur is as intelligent as a human, but his animal nature rules.

F.Y.I.: College fraternities sometimes use the centaur as a mascot because they identify with the beast's Greek reputation of being a wild and crazy party animal!

## **Dragon**

A.K.A: "Draco"....Latin for Dragon. "Wyerm"...Old English. "Cipactli"...Mexican.

Origin: The Ancient World before humans. According to legends, the first dragons rose from the seas and flew off to live on mountaintops. Their numbers grew, and dragons were found everywhere on earth. We now see a clear distinction between Eastern and Western dragons.

Current Location: Unknown. It is suspected that a few of these beasts still live near Mt. Everest because the last official sighting in 1919 was in the Himalayas, where a

Scottish explorer came upon an enormous dragon sunning itself beside a mountain pool. The man made a quick sketch and ran for his life. When he returned to civilization, he published his sketch and a description of the beast in the August 1920 edition of the National Geographic Society journal.

**Preferred Habitat:** Dragons survive in any climate, but their favorite place to live is a dark cave, high above the world, far away from humans. They are solitary creatures.

**Appearance:** Dragons have dinosaur blood flowing in their veins. Like their ancestors, dragons have strong reptilian bodies covered in armor-like scales with razor-sharp spikes along the length of their backs. Some dragons fly, some don't. Some are friendly, miniature, multi-colored beasts like the Bali dragon, while others are fierce, forty foot, garbage-green specimens.

**Diet:** Carnivores in cold, northern regions that hunt humans and small mammals. These are the dragons that have black blood. Herbivore in warmer, southern lands that eat green leafy vegetables, and have green or yellow blood. These southern salad-eaters are slimmer serpents, while their northern relatives are bigger and meaner.

**Danger Rating:** High. Any dragon can spew fire and roast his dinner in the wink of an eye! Also, most dragons are lightening fast for a short sprint.

**Footnote:** Dragons are attracted to shiny objects and love to build treasure piles of gold, jewels, knight's armor, royal crowns, and other sparkling jewels. Dragon treasure is tempting, but think twice before entering a dragon's lair; they have keen eyesight and can smell you a mile away. Dragons will travel to the end of the earth to find any thief who steals from its hoard.



F.Y.I.: Dragons are afraid of the dark. Every dragon sleeps with a special “blankie.” An old knight’s tale from 1250 A.D. says that if you can get close enough to steal a dragon’s blanket, the creature will wail and cry like a baby, and trade its entire treasure just to get back its dirty, singed, slobbered-covered, cloth.

### **Erlking**

A.K.A.: “King of the Dwarves”, “The Invisible Emperor”

Origin: Germany 1200 B.C. Legend tells of dwarf’s ancestors existing long before humans walked the earth. They were not always cave dwellers. There was a time long ago when dwarves lived above ground in forests and hills. They lost a great battle with the ancient tribe of grotesquely malformed Fomorians, and the entire dwarf race retreated into the depths of the earth. They made the best of their subterranean life and became skilled miners working in silver and gold creating the world’s most magical swords.

Current Location: Last seen in caves of Romania and Hungary. As King of the Dwarves, the Erlking is the most evil and the darkest of all dwarves. He has allowed thousands of dwarves to be sacrificed in order to protect himself. Dwarf numbers are dwindling daily.

Preferred Habitat: Being a dwarf, the Erlking can tolerate filtered sunlight, but prefers darkness where his nasty deeds go unseen. Dwarves belong underground where they dig and mine all day and all night.

Appearance: Not more than four feet tall, grey, leather-like skin, an ancient weathered face, and always a nasty smell. He has small black eyes that burn red when he’s

enraged, and most of his body is covered in wiry red hair. Almost always bearded.

Diet: Carnivore whose favorite meal is children, though he will eat any flesh.

Danger Rating: High. Children in Germany are taught never to go into the forest alone.

This shape-shifter can appear as a harmless animal only to lure wandering children farther into the forest where he takes them to his cave and eats them for dinner.

Footnote: The Erlking is a member of the Syth, the fairy folk of another dimension. This is why as a shape-shifter; he can easily move into other worlds where he changes his form, and returns to earth in disguise. Very tricky creature. In the most ancient of ancient days, dwarves and elves were brothers and sisters. No dwarf, especially the Erlking, wants to be reminded that his folk were once beautiful and wise. It makes him sad, but he can't cry, he's forgotten what tears are. He only knows how to hate.

F.Y.I.: There are no women, no female dwarves. Scientist shake their heads and wonder how this race is able to keep multiplying. Some anthropologist suggest that at one time there were millions of dwarf men, women and children, but that the male dwarves were so cruel and ferocious, they killed their own kind, and eventually only a few hundred males were left. These dwarves are very very old, and like an outdated can of tuna, they are past their due date. Their days are numbered.

## **Frankenstein**

A.K.A.: "The Monster"

Origin: Scottish author, Mary Shelley, first wrote about the monster in her 1818 novel, *Frankenstein*. Shelley's monster was assembled from various body parts by the crazy scientist Dr. Frankenstein who brought the creature to life through the electrical

currents of lightening. The lightening frizzled his hair, but it did the trick! Hollywood introduced Shelley's creature to the world in the 1931 horror film, *Frankenstein*.

Current Location: The Black Forest of Germany.

Preferred Habitat: Old forests far away from humans, but near enough to farms where he can steal food, and occasionally hear music.

Appearance: A large, eight foot tall, ugly, human with a scarred face and a square head.

This creature is recognizable by his stiff, awkward walk, and his worn out suit that is too small for him. This guy is one of a kind.

Diet: A scavenger with a human-like diet who likes bread, cheese, and small rodents.

Danger Rating: Moderate. He moves slowly and the odds of ever running into the monster are very slim.

Footnote: Frankenstein enjoys music and good tobacco, has a nasty temper, and is afraid of fire. Beware, this creature has no soul! A bride was created for the monster in the 1935 film, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, and although the bride rejected her husband-to-be, authors speculate as to whether Mr. and Mrs. Frankenstein produced little monsters.

F.Y.I.: Don't ever tease Frank about the fact that he had to wear diapers for the first two months of his life. He'll go into a rage if he even hears the word "diaper."

## **Godzilla**

A.K.A: "Gojira"...Japanese.

Origin: The Ancient World. This giant, fire-breathing reptile first appeared in the 1954 Japanese film *Godzilla*. The creature had been asleep deep in the belly of the earth

for hundreds of thousands of years when he is suddenly shaken awake by atomic testing nearby in the Pacific Ocean. Godzilla crawls to the surface, is exposed to radioactive fallout, and begins to mutate into a giant creature that proceeds to destroy everything in his path, including Tokyo.

**Current Location:** Monster Island; a small, uninhabited island in the South Pacific.

**Preferred Habitat:** Deep mountain caves with cool wet floors and dark springs of water filled with metals and ores.

**Appearance:** Scientists believe Godzilla was a mutant Tyrannosaurus Rex, and like the T-Rex, Godzilla has a huge head with enormous white eyes, long sharp fangs and claws, very short front legs, and uses its strong back legs and thick tail for balance. An average T. Rex weighed 12,000 pounds. Godzilla would probably weigh-in at 22,000 pounds; nearly twice the size and the strength of the big T. The name T-Rex means “big boss lizard king”, which is appropriate because Godzilla is known as the, “King of the Monsters.”

**Diet:** Carnivore, a true flesh-eater that kills and devours humans and other mammals.

**Danger Rating:** Extremely High. This is a fierce dinosaur creature capable of spewing a radioactive flame. Not only can Godzilla destroy anything in his path, but whatever he torches is contaminated by radioactivity.

**Footnote:** Godzilla and the Loch Ness monster are most likely the oldest creatures on earth.

**F.Y.I.:** Godzilla loves to vacation in Tokyo where he collects cars and eats sushi.

## **Hippogryph**

A.K.A.: “Hippogriff”, or “Hippogriffin.”

**Origin:** The earliest drawing of a Hippogryph is dated 3000 B.C. from Iran. Middle Eastern legends claimed this beast was stronger than eight lions and one hundred eagles. Its breeding grounds were in the Rhiphaean Mountains of Europe. The Hippogryph is a product of a rare union between a male griffin, or gryphon, half eagle-half lion, and a female horse. From at least 200 A.D., its griffin father, the royal offspring of an eagle and a lion, was used on the coat of arms of many European royal families as a symbol of power. The world’s best-known Hippogryph is Hagrid’s pet, Buckbeak, in the *Harry Potter* stories.

**Current Location:** Originally, hippogriffs were found only in the far north and in extremely mountainous regions. Now, the last of the species live in the isolated region of Mt. Cook on the southern island of New Zealand.

**Preferred Habitat:** The highest mountains on earth that provide solitude and clean air.

**Appearance:** An eagle’s head and beak, a lion’s front legs and talons, feathered wings, and the body of a horse.

**Diet:** Carnivore, eats small rodents and humans. Females will carry off small children and livestock to feed to their hungry young waiting in elaborate nests precariously perched on craggy cliffs.

**Danger Rating:** Moderate. Hippogryphs are on the endangered beast’s list. Their powers and will to live are slipping away as it’s habitat grows smaller and smaller.

**Footnote:** The Greek god Apollo and magicians of the Middle Ages were able to harness

the power of this flying beast and ride it from one end of the earth to the other in a night's time.

F.Y.I.: This beast of noble birth will only eat carry-out food. It has forgotten how to hunt and kill for itself.

## **Jinn**

A.K.A.: "Genies" ...Islamic. "Jinshin-Uwo" ...Japanese. Djinn

Origin: According to Arabian tales, Jinns existed before the creation of mankind, and Allah created these creatures from black, smokeless fire.

Current Location: Unknown. Because these fabulous creatures are of a supernatural origin, it is believed that they have removed themselves from the earth's three-dimensional plane and are living in a parallel world invisible to human sight.

Occasionally, a wizard or a child will see a jinn.

Preferred Habitat: Their bodies are made of air and/or fire, therefore they exist only in the presence of these two elements. You might find them deep in the interior of the earth or in the upper stratosphere.

Appearance: Jinns are shape-shifters with gigantic, transparent bodies. When they want to be seen they may take on the shape of a human; either a beautiful female with long black hair or a handsome male with white hair. Both have green eyes and would look like any human except for the fact that their skin is blue.

Diet: Herbivore when they are in human form, and in their other-world form they consume massive amounts of ultraviolet rays and galactic dust.

Danger Rating: Low. They are one of the magical creatures you would be lucky to see.

In Ancient Russian Folklore, Jinns were caught by magicians and their magical black cats who were able to see supernatural beings.

Footnote: Their behavior is unpredictable. You never know what a Jinn is going to do.

They like to play tricks. They remain invisible most of the time, but like genies, if a Jinn is trapped in the physical form, they must do the will of their captor. These amazing creatures are feared for the magical power they have over people. They can put you to sleep, transport you to a faraway place, and miraculously return you to your bed, all the while you think you were dreaming.

F.Y.I.: Humans desire Jinns because of their awesome powers to grant wishes, but they also fear the Jinn because if your attempt to capture this creature fails, the creature may then own you! It's probably a lot safer to play the lottery.

### **King Kong**

A.K.A.: "The Eighth Wonder of The World"...English

Origin: Based on the novel King Kong, written in the early twentieth century by Edgar Wallace and Merian C. Cooper. This book became the classic 1933 RKO Radio Pictures film, *King Kong*, that is on the list of the one hundred greatest films ever made.

Current Location: Somewhere in the South Pacific

Preferred Habitat: Primordial jungle of Skull Island in the South Pacific where the natives of the island worshipped Kong as a god.

Appearance: A gigantic silverback gorilla. Kong's size varies from movie to movie, but suffice it to say he is a huge, angry, man-eating, gorilla.

Diet: Although the average silverback gorilla is a herbivore, a vegetarian that enjoys a peaceful meal of bananas and leaves, the monster Kong has a nasty reputation for being a terrifying carnivore that devours humans or any other living thing that gets in his way.

Danger Rating: Extremely High

Footnote: Natives have reported that Kong left small versions of himself on the island.

This fact leads scientists to believe that more gigantic gorillas exist; lady Kongs.

F.Y.I.: Kong is ticklish. If you can get close enough to tickle him, he turns to fifty tons of jelly!

### **Loch Ness**

A.K.A. "Nessie" ...Scottish

Origin: The first recorded sighting of the Loch Ness monster was in 6 A.D. in northern Scotland, and villagers have been seeing Nessie for two thousand years. The word Loch is Gaelic for lake, and Ness is the name of the village nearest the lake; Loch Ness means Lake Ness. Scientists speculate that 250,000 years ago Nessie could have been swimming in the North Sea and became trapped in Loch Ness when the glaciers built up a land barrier that cut off the lake from the sea. Scientists think it is possible that large beasts do live in Loch Ness as it is so deep. Underwater photography has revealed large, moving shadows in the deep, murky water.

Current Location: Loch Ness in Scotland. Nessie is not alone; Lake Kos Kol in Russia has a Nessie, Lake Tahoe in northern California has a Jessie, Lake Champlain in New York has Champ, and there is a Bessie in Lake Erie. An interesting theory suggests



that many deep-water lakes around the earth are all connected by an underwater system of tunnels, thus allowing these ancient sea serpents access to international travel. Geologists admit the existence of underwater caves, but current technology is not advanced enough to prove or disprove the tunnel theory. Note: as this book is going into print, a group of scientists using state-of-the-art technology to beam ultrasound waves into Loch Ness, found no large shapes in the lake, so they announced to the world that there is no Nessie. These scientists obviously had not heard about the tunnel theory, or else they would have known that Nessie is able to come and go as she pleases, and is able to travel hundreds of miles in a day. She might have been basking on the sunny shores of Majolica that day.

**Preferred Habitat:** Deep lakes of freezing, algae-filled water in the northern hemisphere.

**Appearance:** A fifty to sixty foot water serpent; grey snake-like head, thin neck, large body with two shiny humps on its back and a long tail. Overall, Nessie is another beast that looks surprisingly like a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

**Diet:** Omnivore that eats small fish and water plants. Nessie would enjoy a smoothie made of fish, plankton, slime and peat.

**Danger Rating:** Low. Nessie, like a Unicorn, is very shy and you would be lucky to see her.

**Footnote:** St. Columba reported seeing Nessie in 565 A.D.-and he wouldn't lie!

**F.Y.I.:** Visa has records to prove that a Scottish customer named Nessie MacNess has earned a record number of frequent traveler miles, and recently redeemed 400,000 points to purchase an Olympic size hot tub to be installed on the shores of

Loch Ness, Scotland. All the media coverage has gone to her head.!

## **Mummy**

A.K.A.: “The walking dead.”

Origin: This living mummy made his first appearance in the 1932 Universal Studio’s horror classic, *The Mummy*, based on a story written by Nina Putnam and Richard Schayer. Archeologist uncover the mummy who has been buried for 3700 years near the ancient Egyptian city of Hamunaptra. This mummy was unique in that it appeared to have been buried alive and showed signs of a struggle. The men found a golden box buried along with the mummy that warned anyone opening the box would die. The foolish men paid no attention to the warning, and found themselves facing a horrifying experience with the living mummy.

Current Location: Believed to be deep beneath the Great Pyramid of Egypt? The original Mummy was from Egypt, but now they can be found all over the world.

Preferred Habitat: Egyptian sarcophagus

Appearance: A human corpse wrapped in yards of rotting cloth. Beside a horrible smell of death to this creature, his skin is dry, wrinkled, and dusty.

Diet: Does not eat, its dead.

Danger Rating: Extremely High. Because this creature is dead and has no soul, it is tricky to get away from it, or to reason with it. His stare can mesmerize a person and control their will so that they are helpless and must do as the mummy instructs. There is no way to fight back except with fire. Mummies hate fire because of the light it produces. You have to keep yourself surrounded by fire until the creature retreats from the light.

And then you run.

F.Y.I.: Modern-day mummies are wrapped in toilet paper! No secret oils or magical herbs; just toilet paper and Elmer's glue.

## **Naga**

A.K.A.: "Sea Serpent"...Old English "Naginis" is a female Naga.

Origin: Indian Myth, but found in legends of Thailand, Vietnam, Japan and all Southeast Asia, where sculptures of Nagas are used to guard entrances to temples and shrines.

Current Location: Unknown. Last sighting was in 2003 when a Thai fisherman reported seeing one in the South China Sea near the Paracel Islands.

Preferred Habitat: Watery realms under the earth or beneath rivers and seas. They are believed to be miserable beasts, continually grieving because they do not have a soul.

Appearance: This serpent-like creature has as many as seven heads all hooded like a cobra and just as venomous. It may be male or female. Size varies. Some Nagas are very small and may appear as a common snake, but they still possess all the power of their race. It is semi-divine, semi-human and is more powerful and wealthy than any king or queen.

Diet: Herbivore that eats seaweed and occasionally mollusks.

Danger rating: High. They have no soul and are cold-blooded, not a creature you can reason with. The Naga has always had an ultimate power over all the water of the earth. Its supernatural power comes from a gleaming jewel set in the center of its forehead.

Footnote: Like dragons, Nagas are believed to hord great treasures under the sea in their

sparkling palaces of diamonds and jewels. There is a legend that the land of India is a yellow color because the dust of a thousand chariots of Naga gold, spilled and stained India golden.

F.Y.I.: Some tribes in India claim to be descendants of the Naga.

## **Orc**

A.K.A.:

Origin: Northern Scandinavian countries of Sweden and Norway. Apparently orcs were compatible with humans in some ancient time, but humans turned on the orcs and caused them to retreat deep into the earth. In the darkness of the earth, their nature became evil and cruel. Gradually over thousands of years, orcs resurfaced and began to take their revenge on humans. An orc never forgives a wrong against itself or its kind. Their hatred is as eternal as their pain.

Current Location: Small, rocky outcroppings along the North Atlantic coast of Scotland.

Preferred Habitat: Caves and underground lakes.

Appearance: Ancient legends describe orcs as large sea beasts with sharp teeth and an angry temperament. Apparently when they took up residence in the underworld, their bodies became ugly and twisted and in place of their scales and fins they grew hair and huge eyes to be able to see in the dark.

Diet: Carnivore, eats raw flesh of any thing they can catch.

Danger Rating: Extremely High. They live to kill.

Footnote: Obviously orcs were around long before J.R.R. Tolkien made them famous in his novel, *Lord of the Ring*. He created orcs that were more like goblins who live in

caves and only come out in the night because they can't stand the sunlight. All orcs remain on the "most cruel" list!

F.Y.I.: Never confuse an orc for an ogre. They are cousins that hate each other. Ogres have giant blood in their veins and are slower and dumber than an orc.

### **Phantom of the Opera**

A.K.A: "The phantom."

Origin: The French novel, *Le Fantome de l'opera*, written in 1910 by ...

Gaston about a child who was born with a terribly disfigured face, and quickly abandoned by his mother who sold him to a gypsy freak show. Abused and mistreated, he became a monster. A young dancer helped him escape his life as a caged creature and hid him in the dark underworld of the Paris Opera. The darkness beneath the opera house was the only world the Phantom ever knew. Here he grew to manhood.

Current Location: Somewhere in the darkest corners of Paris.

Preferred Habitat: Deep below the city of Paris, France. Here the Phantom is safe in the world of darkness he has created under the Paris Opera House among the city's medieval torture chambers.

Appearance: A masked-man who is hiding a horrible, scarred face. He dresses in the fine clothing of a wealthy gentleman. He might blend in with the audience of the Opera House except for the fact that he wore a black mask all the time.

Danger Rating: High. Although the Phantom has not been sighted for nearly one hundred years, he kills without remorse, and has a wicked mind.

Footnote: Don't be fooled by Hollywood, the real Phantom is a grotesque creature.

F.Y.I.: The Phantom is afraid of the dark, and sleeps with a nightlight beside his bed.

### **Questing Beast**

A.K.A.: "Beast Glatisant"...Old English

Origin: One thousand years ago King Arthur of England, first saw this creature in a dream. Soon villagers began reporting an enormous beast was terrorizing the countryside, devouring cattle and people. One of Arthur's knights, Pelinore, spent his entire life hunting the beast, but never found it.

Current Location: Somewhere in Britain.

Preferred Habitat: Old forests with caves for hiding.

Appearance: A creature with a serpent's head, a leopard's body, a lion's hindquarters, and the hooves of a deer. Its howl was horrible to hear; it was like sixty hounds all baying at once.

Diet: Carnivore eating all forms of living creatures; humans and wild beasts.

Danger Rating: Low.

### **Rodan**

A.K.A: "Heisei"...Japanese

Origin: Japanese miners digging deep in the earth awoke the beast from an ancient hibernation. Scientist theorize that Rodan is the offspring of ancient reptiles. Most likely it is a Pterodactyl, a flying lizard, whose name means Wing-finger.

Current Location: Small uncharted island in the southern hemisphere.

Preferred Habitat: Tropical climates.

**Appearance:** Like its ancestors the Pterodactyls, Rodan is a gigantic, sixteen-ton, bird-like monster with spiked wings up to twenty feet across. It has razor-sharp teeth and spiked furry wings. It sleeps hanging upside down like a bat. Though it looks like a gigantic bat; bats are mammals and are warm-blooded and nurse their young, whereas Rodan is a cold-blooded reptile.

**Diet:** Carnivore that catches insects and small birds in the air, and dives into the water to scoop up fish and young sea animals.

**Danger Rating:** Extremely High because of the Uranium heat beam it can shoot from its mouth.

**Footnote:** More dangerous than dragons not only because it can kill with its fiery radiation-breath, but because its powerful wings can cause tremendous windstorms.

**F.Y.I.:** Rodan flosses every night to remove small children and goats caught in between his fangs.

## **Selkies**

**A.K.A.:** “Sea Folk”...Old English, “Seilb”...Anglo-Saxon. Selchies or Roane.

**Origin:** Prehistoric, before people recorded stories and events. They are kin to the Fairyfolk; dwarves, elves, gnomes, leprechauns and all those denizens who inhabit the “otherworld.” They are shape-shifters.

**Current Location:** The icy Atlantic Ocean near the Orkney and Shetlands Islands of Britain.

**Preferred Habitat:** Rough seas and rocky shores where humans seldom venture. Because they need air to breathe, their underwater homes are in caverns, not open sea.

**Appearance:** Look like seals with large eyes and grey silky skin. The female selkie sometimes comes ashore and sheds her sealskin. She may then take a human husband and have human babies, but if she becomes too homesick for the sea, she will put her skin back on and disappear into the sea, never to be seen again.

**Diet:** Fish and seaweed. Even when in human form, a selkie will only eat food from the sea.

**Danger Rating:** Low. However gentle these sea folk appear to be, tales are told of how a selkie will fiercely avenge any harm or insult by causing treatorous storms and sinking ships. As with all Sidh folk, you must be careful never to offend them.

**Footnote:** The clan MacCodum of North Uist in the Outer Hebrides, Scotland is known as “Silochd nan Ron”, which translates as “the offspring of the seals.” Seals have always been known for their shape-shifting abilities, and many Scottish and Irish families include seal folk in their family trees. You could say, “Selkies swim in the gene pools of many Celtic families.

## **Troll**

**A.K.A.:** Sometimes confused with Ogres.

**Origin:** Ancient World. Trolls, along with all other forms of giant beasts, are said to have existed long before humans. Found in forests and mountains of Scandinavia since the end of the last Ice Age 12,000 years ago. Trolls are members of the Giant family, along with their nasty cousins, Cyclopes and Ogres.

**Current Location:** Scandinavian countries; Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. There have been new sightings of trolls in the mountains of Ukraine, and as far away as the Arctic



regions of Northern Alaska and Canada.

**Preferred Habitat:** Cold, desolate mountain ranges, with caves for shelter. Like dwarves, trolls seem to have been driven underground to where they now hate and fear sunlight.

**Appearance:** Trolls vary in size from a smaller troll that could live comfortably under a bridge to the enormous mountain troll. They are very strong, but very dumb. They have long crooked noses, huge flat feet, a bushy tail, and only two or three fingers and toes. They may wear animal skins and the women carry their young in furry packs strapped to their backs.

**Diet:** Carnivores who are always hungry for human flesh: cooked or raw it doesn't really matter. All forms of giants eat anything, they're not picky.

**Danger Rating:** Extremely High, as they are one of the few creatures that seems to be growing in population and increasing their range. They may be in Canada as of the printing of this book.

**Footnote:** You might have heard that trolls are nocturnal and will turn to stone if touched by sunlight. It's not true. They only stand still long enough for their beady little eyes to adjust to the sunlight, and then they return to whatever they were doing.

**F.Y.I.:** For fun, male Trolls travel along roads and highways at night collecting road-kill. They take it home and the female trolls cook it for breakfast.

## **Unicorn**

**A.K.A.:** "K'l-lin"...China, "Kar-ka-dann" ...Muslim

**Origin:** Ancient India. As early as 2000 B.C. Persian cave drawings depicted a winged horse. The first written description was by the Greek physician, Ctesias, who lived

at the court of the King of Persia for seventeen years. In 416 B. C. Ctesias wrote that he had seen a wondrous white horse in India that was too swift to capture and had a single, magical horn growing out of its forehead. Stories grew from there. Four hundred years later, the Roman historian, Pliny described the unicorn as a horse-like creature with the head of a deer, the feet of an elephant, the tail of a swine, and a three foot black horn. Julius Caesar in his notes about the Gallic Wars, wrote about a stag-like creature with a single horn living in the Hercynian Forest near the Rhine River in Germany. And in France, magical creatures like the unicorn were known to live in the ancient forest of Broceliande in Brittany.

**Current Location:** Unknown. Historians fear the Unicorn may be extinct, though many are hopeful that the beast has fled to the most distant corners of the earth where it can live in peace and hopefully increase in number.

**Preferred Habitat:** Originally India, but they spread to ancient forests of Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

**Appearance:** Early reports said it was the size of a donkey with a dark red head, white body, blue eyes, and a single eighteen-inch horn in the center of its forehead. The horn was multicolored; white at the base, black in the middle, and red at the tip. There have been other one-horned creatures throughout history; cattle, rams, and horses usually belonging to kings and being symbols of power.

**Diet:** Herbivore that especially like sweet grasses, grains, and sparkling spring water.

**Danger Rating:** Low. This is one beast you would be fortunate to see. However the speed, strength, and vicious temperament made this noble creature almost impossible

to see, let alone catch.

Footnote: In the Middle Ages many people believed that if a cup was made from the unicorn horn, anyone who drank from it would be protected from poisons, convulsions, and epilepsy. Many wealthy noblemen bought objects sold as unicorn horn, called alicorn, but were actually horn of more common animals like deer, sheep or goats. It was also believed that if a unicorn stirred any pool with its horn, the water would turn sweet and pure. The constellation Monoceros is a unicorn.

### **Vampire**

A.K.A: “The Dead” ... English, “upuir”...Russia, “vapir”...Bulgaria, “villak...Poland, “wurwolaka”...Albania, “vrykolaka”...Greece, “dearg-dal”...Ireland, “pamgri” ...Hungary, “tii”...Polynesia. As you can see, Vampires are found all over the world!

Origin: Vampires have been in folklore for thousands of years. Even the ancient Greeks told stories about a beast that drank people’s blood. In the 1500’s stories of blood-thirsty vampires were written in Hungary, Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, Russia, Greece, and Turkey. In 1645 a Greek writer named Leone Allaci, published a book about vampires that caught the minds and imaginations of Western Europeans. In 1897 the Scottish author Bram Stoker, wrote his novel *Dracula*, about a vampire named Count Dracula, and was based on the cruel, authentic, Romanian prince named Vlad Tepes from Transylvania.

Current Location: Count Dracula is in a grave in the Carpathian Mountains of Hungary, but ordinary vampires are everywhere!

Preferred Location: A wooden coffin to sleep in during the daylight hours.

**Appearance:** In Eastern Europe vampires may appear as well-dressed gentleman wearing a high-collared cloak and top hat, but with large fang-like eyeteeth. The females may wear lovely gowns, and are often beautiful. The nice clothes cannot cover up the fact that these creatures are walking corpses. Looks can be deceiving. Remember, vampires are shape-shifters. They might appear as a wild, raging wolf, or be as silent as a midnight bat. Vampires may miraculously become a wisp of mist and rise up out of their earthen graves. Did you ever wonder why there always seems to be a graveyard mist? Beware of these signs: a strong, but thin-looking person with pale, cold skin, hairy hands, sometimes pointed ears and always horrible breath and a nasty body odor! Remember, a vampire has no reflection in a mirror.

**Diet:** Carnivore. They “want to suck your blood.” Beware, a vampire’s eyes will glow red when they are hungry!

**Danger Rating:** Extremely High, but interesting to note that vampires usually attack close friends and relatives. Remember mom’s old saying, “Choose your friends wisely”.

**Footnote:** “Vlad Dracula” is loosely translated as “Vlad, son of the Devil.” Old gypsy tales tell us to keep away a vampire you need garlic, or a piece of iron, a crucifix, or holy water. Experts say that vampires and werewolves can both be stopped by a silver bullet. Stopped, but not killed. To kill this creature you can expose it to bright sunlight, immerse it in running water, or drive a wooden stake through its heart when it’s sleeping in its coffin. Gory, but it does the trick.

**F.Y.I.:** Dracula sucks his thumb. A nasty habit he picked up as a child before his fangs

## **Werewolf**

A.K.A.: “Werewolf” ...Anglo-Saxon word meaning man-wolf, “Lycanthrope” ...Greek.

Origin: The first werewolf was, Lycaon, a Greek King who lived 3000 years ago. That is why Lycanthropy is the word for someone who is a werewolf or who feels like they may be one. Greek writers in 450 B.C. spoke of werewolves, and by 50 B.C. the Roman historian Pliny recorded the creature’s existence as fact. Pliny was skeptical, but most people took werewolves very seriously. There was a great fear of these shape-shifters who could be your neighbor during the day and turn into a fierce, blood-thirsty wolf at night. Anyone bitten by one of these creatures becomes a werewolf too. In the 1500’s more than 30,000 people in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy were arrested, tried and executed for being werewolves.

Current Location: Worldwide

Preferred Habitat: Small villages or towns where they can live quietly, or cities where they are just one of a crowd. Either way, they don’t want to be noticed.

Appearance: A human who can transform into a super strong, gigantic wolf, but with the cunning and intellect of a human mind. Most werewolves are men, but some are women. There are even werewolf children. The longer a person is a werewolf, the more it shows these signs; a thick, hairy unibrow, pointed, furry ears, extra long, dirty fingernails and large, sharp teeth. He may stay indoors during the day and only go out at night.

Diet: Carnivore. At night, often under the full moon, the werewolf devours men, women, children, and livestock, and has no appetite during the day.

Danger Rating: Extremely High. Ordinary weapons are no use against a werewolf.

According to legend, the skin of a werewolf cannot be pierced except by a silver bullet that has been blessed by a priest.

Footnote: There is a rare genetic condition called hypertrichosis, where a person develops dense body hair everywhere except the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet making them look like a wolf.

F.Y.I.: It's a little known fact that werewolves have a problem with spitting up giant hairballs of their own fur.

### **Xanthus**

A.K.A.: "Devil Mares"...Greek.

Origin: The Ancient World, notably the Mediterranean Sea. 1200 B.C. King Diomedes of Greece, owned four flesh-eating mares that were so dangerous and so strong they had to be locked in a stable made of bronze. Although the devil mares bred with wild horses for more than two thousand years, their viciousness and killing instinct has never been broken.

Current Location: A heavily guarded nature preserve on the Greek island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea.

Preferred Habitat: Roaming free in golden pastures, or running in the surf.

Appearance: Giant, muscular mares that foam at the mouth with anger and rage. They are almost always black with burning red eyes. Their manes and tail are long, flowing white hair. As with other creatures in nature, this striking contrast is often a warning for others to stay away.

Diet: Carnivores, eating sheep and small rodents.

**Danger Rating:** High. There is no controlling these beasts. They are kept apart so they won't kill each other. Their anger and rage never ends. They live to destroy.

**Footnote:** There is a Greek law that forbids the Xanthus from being taken off Crete for fear they might breed with other natural horses. They are, however, a treasured species as they are so rare.

**F.Y.I.:** Recent DNA testing revealed that the original Xanthus breed with the beastly Minotaur of Greek legends. Bad idea!

## **Yeti**

**A.K.A.:** "Rakhasa" an ancient Sanskrit word for demon. "Abominable Snowman."

**Origin:** Prehistoric. Stories of Yetis are as old as mankind itself. And although Yetis were frequently seen in the Himalaya mountains, especially in Nepal, the world did not take notice until Eric Shipton, a British mountaineer, photographed yeti footprints in the snowy peaks of Mt. Everest in 1951.

**Current Location:** The Himalayas, always above 10,000 feet.

**Preferred Habitat:** High, snowy, mountainous regions, as far away from humans as possible. They live in caves.

**Appearance:** A seven to ten foot tall human-like creature that is covered in dark brown hair. Their faces are lighter colored and look more human. They are reported to be very fast and very strong.

**Diet:** Omnivore that exists on a very limited food supply eating what small rodents and seasonal berries or green shoots it can find.

**Danger Rating:** Low, as they are very shy and said to be gentle unless provoked by

humans. But watch out for their smell! Every Yeti legend tells of the Yeti's horrible odor that is bad enough to burn your eyes and take the breath out of your lungs.

Footnote: In Tibet, "Yeti" means magical creature. Scientist believe the Yeti is related to Bigfoot of the American Northwest, and Sasquatch of the Canadian wilderness. Some researchers theorize that these human-ape beasts may be an unrecognized stage in human development not only because they look human, but because they've been seen using tools.

F.Y.I.: The latest Yeti sitting was in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. A family reported that a huge, furry creature pushed their son off his four-wheeler and drove it off a cliff.

### **Zombie**

A.K.A.: The "Walking Dead"...English

Origin: The Ancient World. Zombies have always existed. A zombie may be created by a curse, a spell, or by being bitten by another zombie.

Current Location: Worldwide.

Preferred Habitat: Haiti. The zombies prefer to stay in packs because on their own they are rather weak, but their power is greatly multiplied when they are in legion.

Appearance: It is a walking corpse. A being that looks human, but has no mind or soul, and acts at the command of its creator who would be a voodoo sorcerer. They are slower than most humans and have poor coordination. You wouldn't want them on your soccer team.



Diet: Carnivore with an insatiable appetite for human flesh.

Danger Rating: Extremely High. These creatures feel no pain and are nearly impossible to destroy. Fire is the one thing that will protect you because zombies are nearly blind, and if they see fire they panic and flee.

Footnote: Current Haitian law defines Zombie making as murder, subject to the same penalties as other killing.

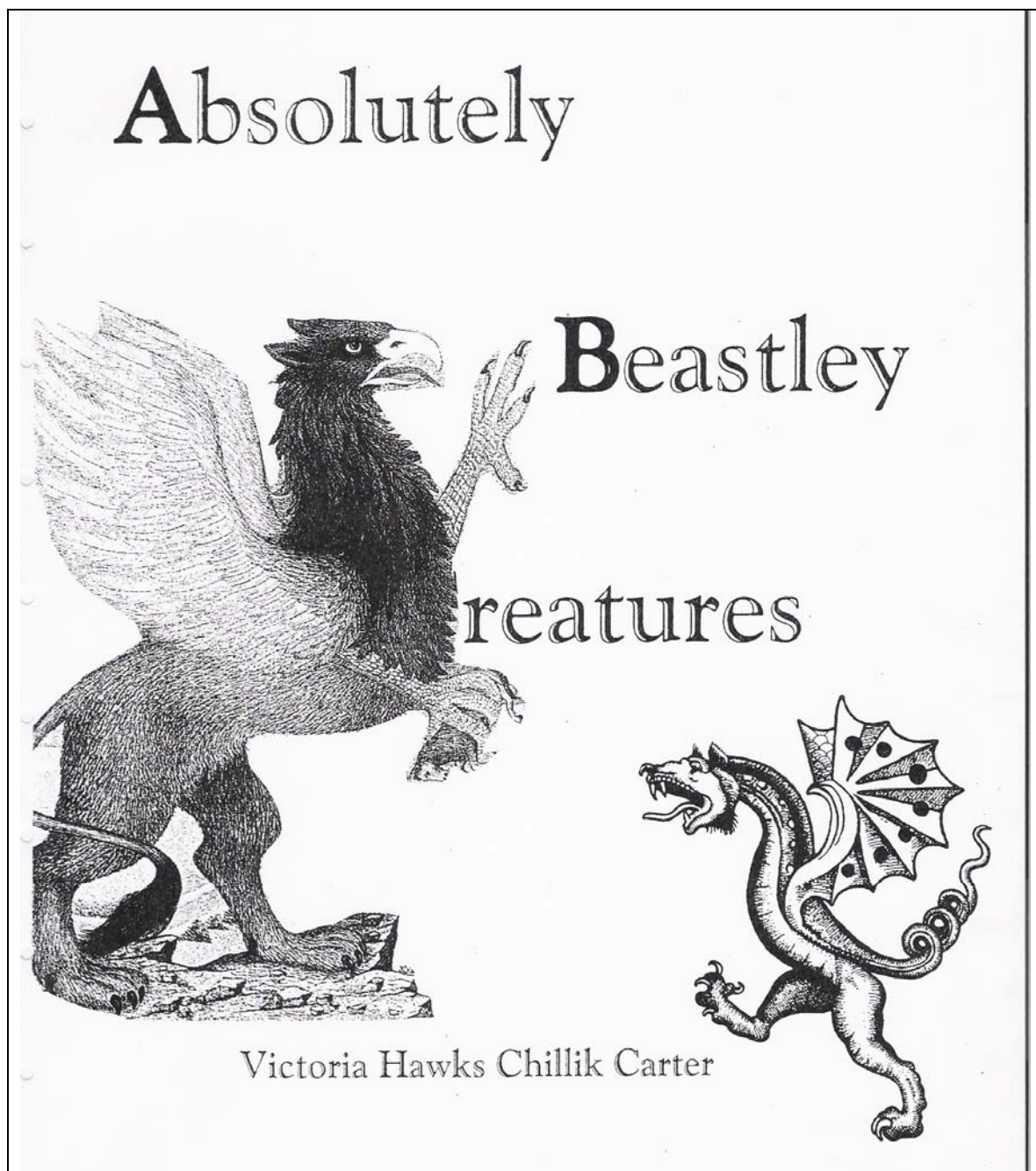
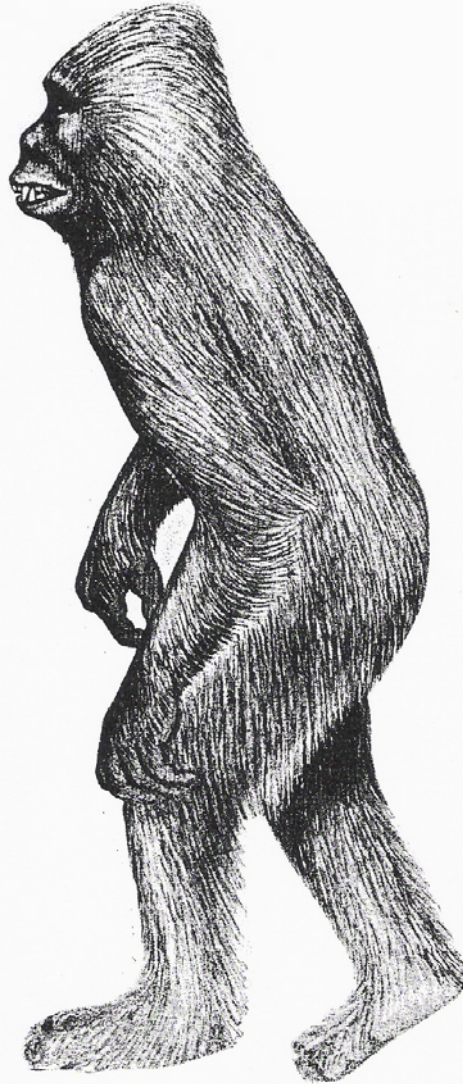


Figure 2:1 Title Page of *Absolutely Beastly Creatures*

# Almas



AKA: "Wildmen of Russia"

Origin: Ancient World

Habitat: Mountains of Russia

Appearance: Ape-like with long arms that swing along its short hairy body

Diet: Small animals and berries, eats flesh raw

Danger Rating: moderate

Note : There has also been reported sightings of a "Wildwoman" ....both have been seen for hundreds of years.

**Figure 2:2 A is for Almas**

# Basilisk



AKA: "A small but lethal snake" ....Roman historian, Pliny, 100 A.D. Basilisko means "little king" in Greek.

Origins: North Africa

Habitat: Mountains of Eastern Europe and China

Appearance: A ferocious lizard, a towering dragon creature, venom-spitting serpent who has the head and wings of a rooster, and th body of a snake.

Diet: All warm-blooded mammals.

Danger Rating: Extremely High

Note: Always frightening and often deadly. Can kill with it's stare.

**Figure 2:3 B is for Basilisk**

# Centaur



**AKA:**

**Origin:** Earliest known tales were from Babylon, 2000 B.C.

**Habitat:** Originally lived throughout the East and Europe. Babylonians drew pictures of centaurs in 1250 B.C. Now they live only on mountainous islands in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. They prefer warm climates.

**Appearance:** Half- human, half- horse; human from the waist up, horse from the waist down.

**Diet:** Herbivores

**Danger Rating:** Moderate, as so few now live anywhere near civilization.

**Note:** Barbaric and savage, roam in wild, rowdy herds. The centaur Chiron was an exception and chose wisdom and learning. He was placed in sky as constellation Centaurus.

**Figure 2:4 C is for Centaur**

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### **Chapter Three: Contemporary Cultural Issues in Children's Literature**

Children's authors advise novice writers to study children in order to know what interests today's youth, what makes them laugh, and what makes them cry. An author also needs to know the difference in writing for a toddler as opposed to writing for a pre-schooler. Best selling children's book author, Beatrix Potter, always tried her books out on children before she sent her manuscripts and art to the publisher, Frederick Warne and Company. An author of children's literature must be certain her work is connecting with her intended audience.

#### ***A Rationale for Heroes in Modern Juvenile Literature: According to Joseph Campbell's Monomyth***

I was told that if I wanted to study mythologies and write stories, I had to study Joseph Campbell's work. Whoever told me that was absolutely right. With my love of myths and stories, studying Campbell was a necessity, an absolute prerequisite to the pursuit of story-telling. Reading Campbell's books and studying *The Power of Myth* video series (1989), has given me a deeper understanding of the human psychology of why we have always and will always tell stories.

It was the publication of *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* in 1949 that established Joseph Campbell as the preeminent comparative mythologist of the twentieth century. Campbell traveled extensively and studied in Europe, but it was mainly from James Joyce that he drew the concept of the monomyth: the One Story, the great mythic story told in all ears and all religions. The monomyth is a general framework, which provides a description of the significant elements of the world's mythology. It is the

initiatory adventure of the hero. It is a way that is open to all, but not everyone harkens to the call. I believe Campbell was telling society that each of us is a potential hero; a hero waiting to be, waiting to answer the call to adventure; the call to become a fully realized, mature, human being.

As I read *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, I realized I had unwittingly been writing a children's story with a young orphaned mouse as the hero. I was astonished as I read Campbell's explanation that all myths have to do with transformation of consciousness via trials and revelations, how challenging experiences could be seen as initiatory adventures. Campbell made the connection between ancient stories and the emotional concerns of modern life. He credited his Sarah Lawrence students with keeping him on task by continually challenging him to give practical applications to his monomyth, his hero mythology, to everyday life.

The hero's journey as described in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* explains an initiatory sequence. The opening stage includes; the call to adventure, the challenge involves: finding allies and guides, facing ordeals, resisting temptations, braving enemies, enduring the dark night of the soul, surviving the supreme ordeal, and winning the elixir (the boon). The concluding steps are: the return threshold passage, resurrection, celebration, accepting a role of service (sharing the elixir), and finally, merging two worlds. To this Campbell shows why societies must have heroes to incarnate values upon which a nation or world-order thrives or dies.

Modern authors and screenwriters have found inspiration and direction in Joseph Campbell's work. George Lucas based much of his screenplay for *Star Wars* (1977) on

what he had summarized from *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*. This most successful film series in history was retelling the initiatory adventures that Campbell had so vividly described. This blueprint of the hero's journey gave Lucas the focus he needed to draw his imaginary universe into a single story. Lucas acknowledged Campbell as his mentor.

Other famous stories follow the monomyth; the lives of Jesus, Buddha, and Mohammad are hero stories, Superman and Moses, Harry Potter, and the Hobbit, Bilbo Baggins.

### ***Joseph Campbell's Monomyth***

Who was Joseph Campbell? If you type the name Joseph Campbell into Google Internet search engine, you will be given more than two million results. The magnitude of this man's influence in our world is yet to be fully realized. Joseph Campbell has been called a mythologist, a masterful storyteller, a beloved teacher, the preeminent comparative mythologist of the twentieth century, and famed as the world's most noted scholar in comparative mythology. He most certainly was one of the greatest minds of the twentieth century. Jonathan Young wrote in *New Perspective* magazine, July 1994, "When the religious history of the twentieth century is written, the impact of Joseph Campbell will surely be a major event in our collective spiritual development."

Joseph Campbell was born March 26, 1904 in New York City. His family's strong Irish Catholic religion had a profound effect upon the young Joseph and led to his early immersion in the rituals and symbols of the church, including becoming an altar boy. At age six, Joseph's father took young Joe and his brother, Charlie, to see Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show at Madison Square Garden. After this performance the young

Joseph so identified with the Native Americans that he was certain he had Indian blood and he set out to learn everything he could about Native Americans. His boyhood academic fervor was noted as he spent years studying the Indian exhibits at the American Museum of Natural History and reading all the books he could find on Native Americans including reports of the Bureau of American Ethnology. By age eleven, he was allowed into the adult stacks of the New Rochelle library, and by high school, he was already writing articles on Native American mythology, and presenting themes that he would work on the rest of his life.

Campbell graduated from the Canterbury Prep School, New Milford, Connecticut in 1921 with the award of “Head Boy.” He entered Dartmouth College the same year to study biology, mathematics and to play football. The following year Campbell read *The Romance of Leonardo daVinci* and discovered he had a passion for the humanities. He transferred to Columbia University, and there he continued a balanced life by running track, playing saxophone in a jazz band, and studying.

On a crossing of the North Atlantic in 1924, Campbell met Jiddu Krishnamurti, the man who would become the world teacher of the Theosophists. Through this meeting with Krishnamurti, Joseph became interested in Hinduism and Buddhism. Campbell received his BA in English from Columbia University in 1925. He completed his MA in Medieval Literature in 1926 with a thesis on the origin of the Wasteland symbolism in the Holy Grail legends. His advisor was Roger Loomis, a leading Arthurian scholar.

In 1927-28, Campbell received the Proudfit Traveling Fellowship for two years of study in Europe. His time in Paris introduced Campbell to Old French, and Provençal

at the University of Paris under Joseph Bedier, noted translator of “Tristan and Iseult,” to tutorials in aesthetics with sculptor Antoine Boudelle, and to the art of Picasso, Brancusi, and Braque. He began to read W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, and James Joyce. At the University of Munich (1928-29). Campbell studied how Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung used myth in psychology. He also noted mythic dimensions in the novels of Thomas Mann. All these masters of modernity would greatly influence his thinking, leading him to theorize that mythologies are the artistic expression of psychological life.

Returning to Columbia University, Campbell wanted to expand the scope of his dissertation topic beyond the grail myth to include parallels with psychology, literature, and art. His advisors made it clear that such interdisciplinary perspective would not be acceptable. Campbell chose not to complete his PhD, but instead he retired into the woods of Woodstock, New York with his sister, Alice, renting a cabin for \$20 a year. Here he spent five years reading extensively and continuing the work he began in Paris. (Young, 1994).

In 1931-32 the twenty-seven year old Campbell drove across the country in his mother's Model T Ford to think about his future. In San Jose, California he visited the nutritionist, Adelle Davis, who was once a romantic interest. Through Adelle he was introduced to John and Carol Steinbeck. It was during this time he read Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, that had a great effect upon his thinking.

In 1934, Campbell became a professor of literature at Sarah Lawrence College, where he would stay for the next thirty-eight years. He married a former student, Jean Erdman, who became prominent in modern dance as both a performer and choreographer,

and starred in Martha Graham's dance company.

He translated *The Gospel of Sri Nihilananda*. Other early writings included the commentary on a Navajo ceremonial story *Where the Two Came to Their Father*, 1943. He co-authored *A Skeleton's Key to Finnegans Wake* 1944. This was the first comprehensive analysis of Joyce's complex novel. It was from Joyce that Campbell drew the concept of the monomyth: the One Story, the one great mythic story told in all eras and all religions. The monomyth is a general framework which provides a description of the significant elements of the world's mythology. It is the initiatory adventure of the hero. It is a way that is open to all, but not everyone harkens to the call. Also in 1944, Campbell wrote the commentary to *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales* and began work on *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*.

Joseph Campbell breathed new life into the old myths, as Albert Camus said each generation must do. Campbell was passionate about his work and his teaching. At the end of a lecture on the Parsifal legend, he would throw down the gauntlet at the end of the seminar and ask his students, "So, is it going to be the Grail Quest or is it going to be the Wasteland? Are you going to go on the creative soul's quest? Are you going to follow the star of the zeal of your soul's enthusiasm? Are you going to live the myth, or is the myth going to live you?" (Young, 1994, p.145). By this, I believe that Joseph Campbell was telling society that each of us is a potential hero; a hero waiting to be, waiting to answer the call to adventure; the call to become a fully realized, mature, human being.

So, as Albert Einstein pursued a unified field theory for the energies of the outer realms, Joseph Campbell dedicated himself to forging a kind of unified field theory of the equally prodigious energies of the inner realms, the personifications of which we call “the gods.” And what physicists call the “fabric of reality”, Campbell called “the net of gems,” a sparkling metaphor from Hindu cosmology that is also a keen image of his own unique weaving together of myth, religion, science, and art. His teachers in those disciplines, he concluded, were all saying essentially the same thing: that there is a system of archetypal impulses that have stirred the human spirit throughout history. It is, as he synthesized it, one grandiose song.

### ***The Hero With a Thousand Faces***

It was the publication of *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* in 1949 that established Campbell as the preeminent comparative mythologist of the twentieth century. He intended the book to be a guide to reading a myth. He tells us that all myths have to do with transformation of consciousness via trials and revelations. Campbell explained how challenging experiences could be seen as initiatory adventures. It was this connection between ancient stories and the emotional concerns of modern life that was distinctive. The book is now considered a classic.

Campbell once told his Sarah Lawrence students that, “The latest incarnation of Oedipus, the continued romance of Beauty and the Beast, stand this afternoon on the corner of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue, waiting for the traffic light to change (p.65). Campbell credits his students with keeping him on task by continually challenging him to give practical applications of his monomyth, his hero mythology, to everyday life.



Campbell's description of the hero's journey has been used extensively by generations of artist and scholars. It showed the similarities among the great stories of world mythology. It is a model of initiatory elements in myth, religion, literature, and ritual. The monomyth is a general framework that provides a description of the significant elements common to all hero stories. Campbell himself summarizes the concept in the following sentence from *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*: "The hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won; the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow men." (p.235).

In his *Encyclopedia of Folk Heroes*, Graham Seal writes that ultimately, the aim of hero narratives is to restore order, to symbolically create or re-create the everyday equilibrium that must lie at the base of all functioning societies in short, to make everything all right again. He says we need folk heroes and they need us. In light of Joseph Campbell's research, I believe Seal's comprehension of the hero phenomenon is too simplistic. It's true, some heroes do right wrongs and restore order. But, there is more to a hero's journey than facing battles and winning wars, there is the returning with the treasure or wisdom and sharing it with the culture from whence the hero emerged. There is a social responsibility.

Campbell also used concepts of archetypes from the psychology of Carl Jung. According to one author, Campbell's contribution was to take this idea of archetypes and use it to map out the common underlying structure behind religion and myth. He

proposed this idea in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, which provides examples from cultures throughout history and from all over the world. Campbell eloquently argues that all stories are fundamentally the same story, which he named the “Hero’s Journey, or the monomyth, and carry truth packaged in many cultural and religious varieties.

The hero’s journey as described in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* explains an initiatory sequence. The opening stage includes; the call to adventure, meeting the mentor, and the threshold passage. Once into the adventure, the challenges involve: finding allies and guides, facing ordeals, resisting temptations, braving enemies, enduring the dark night of the soul, surviving the supreme ordeal, and winning the elixir (the boon). The concluding steps are: the return threshold passage, resurrection, celebration, accepting a role of service (sharing the elixir), and finally, merging two worlds. Campbell shows why societies must have heroes to incarnate values upon which a nation or world-order thrives or dies. The seeker provides a society with the vitality essential for continued existence.

The most memorable contribution of Campbell’s career was made by way of the six-part television series: *Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth* with Bill Moyers, broadcast for the first time in 1987. It became the book *The Power of Myth* that radically increased public awareness of the wisdom to be found in mythology. Joseph Campbell continued to author volumes of his own work, to edit series like *Myth and Man* in 1951, and Alan Watt’s *Myth and Ritual in Christianity* in 1954, he was president of the Creative Film Foundation 1953, a Lecturer at Foreign Service Institute, Department of State, Washington, D.C., and traveled extensively across the entire globe, traveling

into backwards and still primitive places to study human mythology and rituals. There was no end to the man's thirst for knowledge and creative productivity through which he shared his own "bliss" with all of us. Joseph Campbell died in Honolulu, Hawaii October 30, 1987.

***Uses of Joseph Campbell's Monomyth as Criteria for finding modern Heroes.***

In *The Power of Myth*, Campbell defines a hero as, "someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself" (p.34). He follows with examples of well-known historical hero figures such as Christ and Buddha. Campbell makes a very important clarification between a leader and a hero. Campbell says that Tolstoy deals with this issue in *War and Peace*. The example is given of the fact that Napoleon was ravaging Europe, that he may have been a hero to France, but Campbell says Napoleon was not a hero, that he was the nineteenth century counterpart of Hitler in the twentieth century. Campbell explains the hero as a much larger being, one who accomplishes deeds for humankind, for the entire earth.

We humans have moved from isolated groups and tribes with a medicine man or family hero outward into the time now when we are to realize our oneness of being and to look for world heroes. Campbell made the comment in the film series of *The Power of Myth* that humankind must now look to the universe and out into the cosmos as our new frontier where heroes of the earth will venture forth.

***Part I Departure: The Call To Adventure:***

The call to adventure is how a journey/story begins. Sometimes a blunder-apparently the merest chance-reveals an unsuspected world, and the individual is drawn

into a relationship with forces that are not rightly understood. There will be a “herald” to summon the hero to live, or even to die. As apprehended by the mystic, the heralds call is termed “the awakening of the self.” For a young princess in a fairy tale, the herald’s call may signify no more than the coming of adolescence.

Campbell says that whether the herald calls from dream or in reality, there is an irresistible fascination about the figure that appears suddenly as a guide. A perfect example is in Tolkien’s *The Hobbit*, when Gandalf arrives in the Shire unannounced and tells Bilbo Baggins he is going to accompany Gandalf and his dwarf friends on an adventure. They are going to look for a dragon and treasure in The Misty Mountains. As Campbell puts it: in the call to adventure though the unsuspecting yet-to-be-hero feels unfit for the adventure, he or she has had the call because they are ready even if on an unconscious level. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand. As we all know, Bilbo really never had a choice, he was destined to go. It must have been that little bit of Took blood that couldn’t be denied.

***Refusal of the Call:***

Campbell allows for the fact that there are times when the hero-to-be will refuse the call to adventure; this converts the adventure into its negative. He who refuses chooses the safety of conformity and his opportunity to become more is lost and he becomes a victim to be saved. Campbell says that literature of psychoanalysis abounds in examples of desperate fixations where like Daphne and Apollo, a young person will absolutely refuse to grow, to leave parents and become a mature adult. We may

sometimes see an example like little Briar Rose who was caught in time under a spell but was rescued by the kiss of a prince, and we assume woke into womanhood. So, there can be a refusal to the call but not without consequences to be paid.

***Supernatural Aid:***

For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass. Among the Native Americans their character of Spider Woman who lives underground is often the supernatural aid in legend. In classical mythology this is Hermes-Mercury. In Egyptian myth it is usually Thoth. In Christianity it is the Holy Ghost.

Campbell says this benign figure represents the protecting power of destiny. This aid in myths gives one the feeling that you have only to know and trust, and the ageless guardians will appear. People of antiquity knew these guardians by different names, but the esoteric and religious teachings describe much the same characteristics.

***The Crossing of the First Threshold:***

Now, with the supernatural aid to guide him, the hero goes forward on his journey until he comes to the “threshold guardian” at the entrance to the zone of magnified power. These guardians are prehistoric; they bound the world in the four directions—also up and down—standing for the limits of the hero’s present sphere, or life horizon. Beyond them is darkness, the unknown, and danger; just as beyond the parental watch is danger to the infant and beyond the protection of his society danger to the member of the tribe. Campbell points out that the sailors who sailed with Columbus had to be cozened

and urged on because of their fears of the fabled leviathans, mermaids, dragon kings, and other monsters of the deep. Campbell gives a other examples of these regions of the unknown and says that they are free fields for the projection of unconscious content. He says the Russians peasants have the “Wild Women” of the woods who live in mountain caves where they have households like human beings. They are handsome females who are strong and hairy and can make themselves invisible at will. But, they like to dance or tickle people to death who wander alone into the forest, and anyone who chances upon their invisible dancing parties dies. They enjoy human lovers and have often taken human husbands.

The Arcadian god Pan is the best known classical example of this dangerous presence dwelling just beyond the protected zone of the village boundary. Humans were truly fearful of wandering into Pan’s domain

Crossing the threshold is the first step into the sacred zone of the universal source. Here, beyond Apollo through the prophetess at Delphi and past Pan, we find the Muses of Creative inspiration. The adventure is always and everywhere a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown; the powers that watch at the boundary are dangerous; to deal with them is risky; yet for anyone with competence and courage the danger fades.

***The Belly of the Whale:***

The passage of the magic threshold takes the hero into a sphere of rebirth and is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero appears to have died, but as we know from many stories, the hero emerges at some future point seemingly unharmed.

The Irish hero, Finn MacCool, was swallowed by a monster of indefinite form. In Germany, Little Red Ridinghood was swallowed by the wolf. The whole Greek pantheon, with the sole exception of Zeus, was swallowed by its father, Kronos. Campbell explains that all these swallowings, this popular motif, gives emphasis to the lesson that the passage is a form of self-annihilation. No creature, writes Ananda Coomaraswamy, can attain a higher grade of nature without ceasing to exist. The hero will appear to have died and his body even torn to pieces, but he will always return. Campbell explains that the hero whose attachment to ego is already annihilated passes back and forth across the horizons of the world, in and out of the dragon. And therein lies his power to save; for his passing and returning demonstrates that through all the contraries of phenomenality the Uncreated-Imperishable remains, and there is nothing to fear.

***Part II Initiation: The Road of Trials:***

This is where the hero has passed through the threshold and now moves into a favorite phase of the myth-adventure; the tests and ordeals. It is here the hero must call upon the powers of the amulets and advice given to him by his supernatural aid. He may even realize now that there is a benign power supporting him. Campbell gives the popular example of Psyche's quest for her lover, Cupid, and tells how Psyche travels high and low and even to the underworld in her quest.

Heroes of fairy tales and myths must all, it seems, walk the road of trials. It appears that these trials are a prerequisite for the hero's transformation. Many heroes must make this trek alone. Though a few, like Frodo Baggins are fortunate in having a fellow

traveler like Sam Wise Gangy accompany him through the trials and evil of Mordor and into the fires of Mount Doom. Campbell says that this road of trials is, “ in the vocabulary of the mystics, this is the second stage of the Way, that of the “purification of the self”, or in more modern turn: this is the process of dissolving, transcending, or transmuting the infantile images of our personal past. In our dreams the ageless perils, gargoyles, trials, secret helpers, and instructive figures are nightly still encountered; and in their forms we may see reflected not only the whole picture of our present case, but also the clue to what we must do to be saved. Campbell also sees these trials as the means by which a hero discovers and assimilates his opposite ( his own unsuspected self) either by swallowing it or by being swallowed. One by one the resistances are broken. He must put aside his pride, his virtue, beauty, and life, and bow or submit to the absolutely intolerable. Then he finds that he and his opposite are not of differing species, but one \flesh The question is; can the hero put his ego to death.

***The Meeting With The Goddess:***

The ultimate adventure, when all the barriers and ogres have been overcome, is commonly represented as a mystical marriage of the triumphant hero-soul with the Queen Goddess of the World; at the central point of the cosmos, the tabernacle of the temple, or within the darkness of the deepest chambers of the heart. This goddess figure is sometimes known as The Lady of the House of Sleep. She is known by other names as well; the German little Briar-rose, Sleeping Beauty, the Irish fairy Queen of Tubber Tintye, and Tolkein’s Gladeread. Campbell says she always the paragon of beauty, the reply to all desire, the incarnation of the promise of perfection. She is mother who was known to us



in the past collectively as the human race and individually as our own mothers. This mother figure is sometimes good and sometimes bad. On the one hand she is good and is full of comfort and nourishing, and on the other hand she is bad and is absent, unattainable, the mother who would hold to herself the child who needs to push away. We see an example of the great unattainable great goddess figure in the story of the terrible Diana who ruined the young sportsman Actaeon. The youth journeyed into a deep forest where he came upon the beautiful Diana as she bathed in a pool. His presence enraged Diana and she threw water into the youth's face and turned him into a stag. His own hounds hunted him down and killed him.

Campbell says that Woman, in the picture language of mythology, represents the totality of what can be known. The hero is the one who comes to know. She can never be greater than himself, though she can always promise more than he is yet capable of comprehending. She lures, she guides, she bids him burst his fetters. If the two can come together, the knower and the known, all limitations are gone. This is very much the description of any creative process.

***Woman as the Temptress:***

“The tests of the hero, which were preliminary to his ultimate experience and deed, were symbolical of these crises of realization by means of which his consciousness came to be amplified and made capable of enduring the full possession of the mother-destroyer, his inevitable bride. With that he knows that he and the father are one; he is in the father's place. Campbell says that every failure to cope with life situations is ultimately due to a restriction of consciousness. Wars and temper tantrums are the makeshifts of

ignorance; regrets are illuminations come too late. The individual has only to discover his own ogres, his own ideals, his own restrictions. The hero is called to seek life beyond life, and must press beyond the temptress in any form.

***Atonement With the Father:***

In most mythologies, the images of mercy and grace are rendered as vividly as those of justice and wrath, so that a balance is maintained, and the heart is buoyed rather than scourged along its way. Even while the Indian god Shiva dances the dance of universal destruction, his hand gestures the message; “fear not.” Supernatural helpers of the myths and fairy tales of the world are mankind’s assurance that the arrow, the flames, and the flood are not as brutal as they seem, because the ogre aspect of the father is a reflex of the victim’s own ego-derived from the sensational nursery scene that has been left behind, but projected before; and the fixating idolatry of pedagogical non-thing is itself the fault that keeps one steeped in a sense of sin, sealing the potentially adult spirit from a better balanced, more realistic view of the father, and therewith of the world. Atonement (at-one-ment) consists in no more than the abandonment of that self-generated double monster-the dragon thought to be God (superego) and the dragon thought to be Sin (repressed id). The difficult part is letting go of the attachment to ego. One must trust the father is merciful. Doing so, the center of belief is transferred outside of the bedeviling god’s tight scaly ring, and the dreadful ogres dissolve. It is in this ordeal that the hero may derive hope and assurance from the helpful female figure, by whose magic he is protected through all the frightening experiences of the father’s ego-shattering initiation.

And yet, one finds in the end that the father and mother reflect each other, and are in essence the same.

Campbell further explains this aspect of the hero quest by using the example of yet another Bodhisattva, Avalokitesvara-Kwannon, Boundless Love, is said to dwell within all sentient beings. Campbell says we are all reflexes of the image of the Bodhisattva. The sufferer within us is that divine being. We and that protecting father is every man we meet. And so it must be known that, though this ignorant, limited, self-defending, suffering body may regard itself as threatened by some other-the enemy-that one too is the God. The ogre breaks us, but the hero, the first candidate, undergoes the initiation “like a man”; and behold, it was the father: we in Him and He in us.

***Apotheosis:***

At this stage of the hero’s journey, the ogres and dragons, the ego-centered life, have all been fought and transformed. And, as Campbell earlier told us, the hero journey is all about transformation. Now, Campbell explains that the human hero who has gone beyond the last terrors of ignorance may attain a divine state. “When the envelopment of consciousness has been annihilated, then he becomes free of all fear, beyond the reach of change”(p.151.) Campbell gives the example of the Bodhisattvas of Buddhism named, Avalokitesvara, “The Lord Looking Down in Pity” because to him go perhaps more prayers per minute than any other divinity known to man. Why this popularity? During his final life on earth as a human being, he shattered for himself the bounds of the last threshold (which moment opened to him the timelessness of the void beyond the frustrating mirage-enigmas of the named and bounded cosmos), he paused: he made a

vow that before entering the void he would bring all creatures without exception to enlightenment; and since then he has permeated the whole texture of existence with the divine grace of his assisting presence and so that the Least prayer addressed to him, throughout the vast spiritual empire of the Buddha, is graciously heard. Like the Buddha himself, this godlike being is a pattern of the divine state to which the human hero attains who has gone beyond the last terrors of ignorance and wisdom is regained.

***The Ultimate Boon:***

The hero has now reached the heights of the mountain where the God lives and thus he has also reached into the depth of his own soul. The gods and goddesses the hero encounters are to be understood as embodiments and custodians of the elixir of Imperishable Being but not themselves the Ultimate in its primary state. What the hero is seeking is not actually the gods but their graces, ie., the power of their sustaining substance. This miraculous energy-substance is the Imperishable. It is also the miraculous energy of the thunderbolts of Zeus, Yahweh, and the Supreme Buddha, the fertility of the rain of Viracocha, the virtue announced by the bell at Mass at the consecration, and the light of the ultimate illumination of the saint and sage. Its guardians dare release it only to the duly proven.

Sometimes the gods may be over-severe, and the hero has to use his wits and strengths to gain the treasure. In this case, the hero who deceives, slays, or appeases them is honored as the savior of the world. The boon bestowed upon the hero is always scaled to his stature and to the nature of his dominant desire: the boon is simply a symbol of life energy stepped down to the requirements of a certain specific case. The irony, of course,

is that the hero is in a position to beg for the boon of perfect illumination, but what he most often seeks is a longer life, weapons with which to slay his neighbor, or the health of his child. Whatever it may be, the hero is given some life-transmuting trophy.

***Part III Return: Refusal of the Return***

The way of the monomyth is that once the hero has accomplished his hero-quest he must return with his boon. The hero now begins the labor of bringing the runes of wisdom, The Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess, back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon will bring renewal. There are many instances when the return was too much to be asked of the hero. Even Buddha doubted whether the message of enlightenment could be communicated, and saints are reported to have died while in the supernal ecstasy.

***The Magic Flight:***

If the hero in his triumph wins the blessing of the goddess or the god and is then explicitly commissioned to return to the world with some elixir for the restoration of society, the final stage of his adventure is supported by all the powers of his supernatural patron. On the other hand, if the trophy has been attained against the opposition of its guardian, or if the hero's wish to return to the world has been resented by the gods or demons, then the last stage of the mythological round becomes a lively, often comical pursuit. This flight may be complicated by marvels of magical obstruction and evasion.

A Welsh tale of a hero, Gwion Bach, who found himself at the bottom of Lake Bala in the north of Wales. Here he met an ancient giant, Tegid and his wife, Caridwen. Gwion was made to stir a brew for the hag wife; a potion that after a year and a day

would produce three blessed drops of the grace of inspiration. Something went awry and the hero accidentally spilled the three drops on his hand and tasted it. He had now the vision to see the true evil nature of Caridwen so he fled as fast as he could. Here, sounding very much like *The Runaway Bunny*, is a brief description of the ensuing chase: and she went forth after him, running. And he saw her, and changed himself into a hare and fled. And she changed herself into a greyhound and turned him. And he ran towards a river, and became a fish. And she in the form of an otter-bitch chased him under the water, until he was fain to turn himself into a bird of the air. She, as a hawk, followed him and gave him no rest in the sky. And just as she was about to stoop upon him, and he was in the fear of death, he espied a heap of winnowed wheat on the floor of a barn, and he dropped among the wheat, and turned himself into one of the grains. She turned into a hen and ate him.

Sometimes in the magical flight objects are left behind to speak for the fugitive and thus delay pursuit. In a Maori tale, a man wanted to escape from his ogress wife. He instructed the village huts, the clumps of trees, the filth dump, and the temple on the top of the nearby hill to answer for the man while he and his sons escaped by canoe.

In another variation a number of delaying obstacles are tossed behind the wildly fleeing hero. The magic objects tossed behind by the panic-ridden hero-protective interpretations, principles, symbols, rationalizations, anything-delay and absorb the power of the started Hound of Heaven, permitting the adventurer to come back into his fold safe and with perhaps a boon. But the roll required is not always slight.

***Rescue From Without:***

The hero may have to be brought back from his supernatural adventure by assistance from without. That is to say, the world may have to come and get him. The hero may find it a difficult task to leave the “bliss of the deep abode”, as Campbell put it, only to return to the self-scattering of the wakened state. But, life always calls us back. Campbell reminds us that society is jealous of those who remain away from it, and will come knocking at the door.

There is an ancient legend from a time when the beautiful sun-goddess Amaterasu ruled the earth and heavens. Unable to cope with difficult times, the goddess retreated into a heavenly cave. This was a terrible thing for her to do; for the permanent disappearance of the sun would have meant as much as the end of the universe—the end, before it had even properly begun. Needless to say, Amaterasu was coaxed out of her cave through the efforts of eight million gods laughing and making merry. The goddess peeked out of her cave to see who could possibly be cheerful when her disappearance had surely left the land and sky dark and miserable. The gods all made light of her retreat and convinced her to only retreat for a short amount of time at the end of each night.

***The Crossing of the Return Threshold:***

Here we have the final crisis to which the whole miraculous excursion has been but a prelude—that of the paradoxical, supremely difficult Threshold-crossing of the hero’s return from the mystic realm into the land of common day. Whether rescued from without, driven from within, or gently carried along by the guiding divinities, he has yet to re-enter with his boon the long-forgotten atmosphere where men who are fractions imagine themselves to be complete. He has yet to confront society with his ego-shattering

elixir, and take the return blow of reasonable queries, hard resentment, and good people at a loss to comprehend.

Campbell stresses the point that although the hero leaves the everyday world and ventures into an unknown land, the two kingdoms are actually one. He says this is the key to understanding myth and symbol. The realm of the gods is a forgotten dimension of the world we know. And the exploration of that dimension, either willingly or unwillingly, is the whole sense of the deed of the hero. The fearfulness of the loss of personal individuation can be the whole burden of the transcendental experience for unqualified souls. But the hero-soul goes boldly in-and discovers the hags converted into goddesses and the dragons into the watchdogs of the gods. His work continues as the hero tries to communicate to people who insist on the exclusive evidence of their senses the message of the all-generating void or how to represent in a three-dimensional image a multi-dimensional meaning.

***Master of the Two Worlds:***

The hero is further required to now knit together the two worlds. As Joseph so eloquently says it, “Freedom to pass back and forth across the world division, from the perspective of the apparitions of time to that of the casual deep and back-not contaminating the principles of one with those of the other, yet permitting the mind to know the one by virtue of the other-is the talent of the master” (p.229). Nietzsche calls this performance the Cosmic Dancer who lightly leaps from one position to another. This is not frivolous leaping but dexterity and knowledge, it is knowing the Truth.

Campbell says that myths do not often display in a single image the mystery of the



ready transit. Where they do, the moment is a precious symbol, full of import, to be treasured and contemplated. Such a moment was the Transfiguration of the Christ. Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them. Campbell says that this is the whole myth in a moment: Jesus the guide, the way, the vision, and the companion of the return. His disciples are introduced to the full experience of the paradox of the two worlds in one.

***Freedom to Live:***

According to Campbell the goal of the myth is to offer a reconciliation of the individual consciousness with the universal will. And this is effected through a realization of the true relationship of the passing phenomena of time to the imperishable life that lives and dies in all. The hero is the champion of things becoming, not of things become, because he is. Joseph Campbell's hero has made a great journey, fought many battles, relinquished his ego, come to the knowing of his true source and life, and is now free of the falsehood of separation, and able to live knowing well he is a flicker in the eternal flame.

Joseph Campbell summarizes the concept of the monomyth in this single sentence from *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*; The hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.

### *Contemporary Heroes*

In *The Power of Myth* video series, Bill Moyers asked Joseph Campbell why there are so many heroes in mythology. Campbell's answer, "Because that's what's worth writing about." Apparently many authors and screenwriters have agreed with this statement because Campbell was discovered by a new generation when George Lucas based much of his screenplay for *Star Wars* (1977) on what he had summarized From The Hero With a Thousand Faces. The most successful film series in history was retelling the initiatory adventures that Campbell had so vividly described. Lucas had already written two drafts of *Star Wars* when he rediscovered Joseph Campbell's *Hero With a Thousand Faces*. This blueprint of the hero's journey gave Lucas the focus he needed to draw his imaginary universe into a single story. Lucas acknowledged Campbell's work and saw him as a mentor.

Superman is another good example of the monomyth plot. In *Superman The Complete History*, by Les Daniels (1998), the author writes-Siegel (the creator of Superman) seems to have touched upon a mythic theme of universal significance. Superman recalls Moses, set adrift to become the people's savior, and also Jesus sent from above to redeem the World. There are parallel stories in many cultures. It should be noted that the in *The Superman* story and screenplay draw heavily on familiar elements, most obviously the discovery of the baby Kal-El much like that of Moses, and the almost mythical bond between him and his father Jor-El. Simply conceived, Superman's destiny has been to find the image of his father, and then to return to Metropolis, to fight for

Truth, Justice, and the American way.

There are many other popular modern stories that follow the hero's journey; the classical mythic stories of: The Lion King, Prince of Egypt-Disney, Hercules, The Hobbit, The Lord of The Ring Trilogy, and Star Wars. Though not all the stories include all the elements of the monomyth, they all follow a similar path. Campbell points out that the lives of Jesus Christ and Buddha were also examples of the hero journey with strikingly similar lives.

John Flynn writes that whether we follow the mythological expedition of Jason (for the Golden Fleece), Arthur's legendary quest for the Holy Grail, the fabulous travels of Bilbo Baggins, or the cinematic exploits of Luke Skywalker, this heroic paradigm suggests a familiar formula of departure, initiation, and return.

What we are looking for in finding today's heroes is to identify characters that, for one reason or another, are called to, or fall into, an adventure. This quest, Campbell assures us, is just what the hero needed, though he or she most certainly will not think so at the time. During this quest, the hero encounters supernatural forces, he or she may have a guide like Gandalf, or they may not, but they will win a decisive victory against evil, rescue the princess, or prince as in the movie Shrek, and discovers the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and return to share their discoveries with others

### *A Rationale for Islam and America*

While taking Dr. Glasgow's class, Juvenile Literature, I was struck by a statement she made one day in class. I don't remember exactly what the topic of the day was, but my guess is that it had something to do with multicultural studies. Dr. Glasgow said that

if we are going to have wars with other countries, we need to understand the people we are fighting. She went on to tell the class that there is a need for books on the subject of the Islamic culture, and the Muslim people. I heard the word “need” and it sparked an interest I already had in studying Muslim life. My mind was set. I would write a children’s picture book on the subject of Muslim children in America based on the ten years of teaching in an international school and knowing many Muslim children. Before writing the book, I had already spent a year or more talking with Lujain Al Ghamdi and other Muslim students. I realized for me to be able to write a story about being Muslim, I had a great deal of research to do to become even a little knowledgeable on the topic of Islam. This was not a time I could guess or make-up a story. No, the one hundred or so word manuscript would have to be true, would have to be authentic, or else it would be worthless.

How does one go about understanding another culture? The Muslim students were around me every day and we were friends, but I knew I needed to meet their families and experience their home life, and talk to them about their culture. Hours were spent visiting homes, sharing Ramadan meals at The Islamic Center, speaking with Muslim women and girls. They shared their candid opinions on terrorism and why they choose to wear the head-cover, about their husbands and what life in America is like for a Muslim woman or girl. This was the human side of my research, the other piece was manuscript research. After completing *Islam and America*, I decide I wanted to focus my children’s story on the friendship between a Muslim and a non-Muslim girl and to focus on the hijab-the head-cover that is central to the Islamic faith. I wanted to take an

element that is potentially quite volatile, the hijab, and diffuse it when seen through the eyes of two little girls.

The end product of this research was the manuscript, *The Red Scarf*. The manuscript has been sent out to an agent and to several publishing houses. More and more publishers are asking for multicultural material-just as Dr. Glasgow mentioned in her class.

### *Islam and America*

My inspiration for this research was hearing Dr. Glasgow tell her juvenile literature class that if we are going to fight wars with other countries (like Iran), we need to understand them (the people). This ethical/political idea, along with the fact that there is a dearth of books on Islam for children, stayed with me. I kept this need in the back of my mind until this past year when I worked closely with an eight year old Muslim student named Lujain Al-Ghamdi. Lujain and I became good friends and through her I spent time with her family and friends. The need for a children's book on Islam came to the forefront of my thoughts and I realized the time had come for me to start writing a story, especially since I had access to Muslim children and family. I needed a story that might in some way serve as a bridge between Muslim and non-Muslim cultures: "a bridge for small feet to cross." This work is dedicated to Lujain, whose love of life knows no boundaries.

Non-writers seem to have the opinion that children's books are easy to write, that young adult literature is somewhat difficult, and that novels are an extreme challenge. That's not always the case. An experienced children's book author who has moved into

film creation and production recently told me that she believes writing a children's book is harder than writing a screenplay. I agree with this statement. I knew I had a good idea, but as soon as I began to work on the story I realized I knew nothing about Islam and how could I possibly write this book if I didn't know my characters and their worlds? The answer is, I couldn't.

Thus began my education. In the words of Dr. Jackie Glasgow, "Great connections are better than research sometimes!" I'm embarrassed that a woman my age and a teacher at that, didn't know geography, culture, history, or even politics of the Muslim faith. In a poetic sense, this ignorance allowed me to approach the research with the eyes of a child who asks questions for no other reason than that they truly want to know, with no hidden agenda, no power plays, just heart-felt curiosity. And that's what I did. I asked questions, and I was invited into a Muslim household and became friends with the family.

### *Up Close and Personal*

Because family is so important to Muslims, I knew I had to visit a Muslim home in order to accurately write about a Muslim child. I could never have imagined what I found at 3600 Irwin Road on Friday June 2, 2006. I was invited to a party at Lujain's because her father was graduating from O.U. that day with a Ph.D. in Mathematics. I was told not to bring anything, but I did. I brought a bouquet of golden Calla lilies for the graduate. I debated whether or not a gift from a female to a male could possibly offend Lujain's father, but I decided to take my chances because everyone knows flowers are a universal symbol of love and peace. I arrived on time at 7:00. The windows were

all shut and blinds closed. I heard no sounds, but I knocked. Fattmah, Lujain's mother welcomed me in and smiled at the flowers. I didn't recognize her at first because she wasn't wearing her head scarf (hijab), and she had on casual Western pants and a t-shirt.

The apartment was dark and stuffy and there was no sign of a party or any celebration. I thought maybe I'd misunderstood what was going to happen. Lujain was thrilled to see me and ran around the apartment jumping and yelling, as did her little brother. Lujain's older sister, Sho Sho was calmer. Fattmah had a little time to discuss the idea of the multicultural children's book before two female guests arrived. First Heather arrived covered from head to toe in cloth. I watched as she unwrapped herself and emerged from her cocoon looking very American, yet wearing a gown. She sat down and handed me one of her shiny plastic business cards-she sells hijabs on the Internet. The other female, Mary, had only outwardly Muslim attire: a hijab, and she emerged from under it as a pretty American woman who recently converted to Islam. Heather works for Ohio University in Alden Library and sells her scarves to an international Muslim community. Mary is a graduate student at O.U. and works in special education. The three friends embraced and chatted about the Al-Ghamdi's upcoming return to Saudi Arabia. I was then introduced and the discussion turned to my interests in learning about Islam and how I wanted to work with Fattmah to write a children's book. The two women were excited about my idea of a book about Muslim and Christian children, and especially that I wanted the text to be printed in English and in Arabic. They both said they knew so many Muslim families who are raising their children in America and the

children are all know English, but parents want their children to read Arabic text about Muslim life. This was encouraging marketing information.

Periodically I reminded myself of the unique situation I was in; that I was sitting in a Muslim home with three Muslim women who had literally let down their hair and were ready and willing to tell me about life for them as a Muslim. We exchanged questions and answers, and it became obvious that this was the extent of the party. There would be no males arriving. Lujain's father and his Muslim friends were playing soccer and wouldn't be home until late. I learned that this was not a special evening, nothing out of the ordinary. Every Friday the men are required to go to mosque and the women and children meet together in the privacy of their own homes. I gave up my dream of attending a Muslim party. There would be no Muslim food. I had imagined eating delicious spiced rice and salads and meats. Deserts? There wouldn't even be a cake. We four women and three children sitting in the dark warm apartment were all there would be of a celebration. More than once Fattmah said, "It's not about food." I swallowed my hunger and told myself this was a golden opportunity to freely speak to these Muslim females. I drank my water and we talked.

Fattmah's three children along with some neighborhood friends ran in and out of the house, but were admonished to keep doors shut so as not to expose the undraped women to the eyes of a passing male. Our visit was absolutely normal until one small boy rushed into the apartment, flung wide the front door and all three women jumped to their feet and threw themselves out of view. I was shocked, amazed. It was instantaneous-a reflex. I'd never experienced anything like it, except perhaps seeing a flock of birds rip into



flight at the approach of a cat. They jumped out of view as if they were naked. Three modest, conservative, Christian women would have to be totally unclothed to react that way. When the boy shut the door our conversation continued, but I felt a bit strange that a head-cover could mean so much to a religion, until they enlightened me.

***What They Told Me***

Sho Sho is thirteen. She covers her long thick black hair with bright-colored hijabs. She has lived in Athens for seven years and has a close-knit group of friends. Sho Sho jumped into the conversation and said that she chose to wear her head-cover in sixth grade, but that nine-year-old Lujain could decide for herself when to cover her head. Lujain said with a smile, "I'm going to wear it late." Lujain is a wild child and I can't see her wearing it at all, but the female Muslims have to wear a hijab at least by the time a girl begins menstruation. Sho Sho, who is quite intelligent and appears to be a strong girl told me that she wears the hijab because it is respectful to Allah, "Allah wants us to wear it, it makes Allah happy." I wondered why so much emphasis is put upon the hair as a source of beauty and why faces or hands or feet weren't required to be covered. I didn't ask, I just listened.

Not only does Sho Sho cover her head, but she has had to explain to her non-Muslim friends that a Muslim girl does not flirt or have boyfriends, she keeps herself as a virgin for her husband. And when married, her "beauty is kept for him." Mary, a very pretty married Muslim, said she noticed an immediate change in men's responses to her when she began wearing a hijab. Mary articulately explained her faith-based reasoning: "Without the hijab men would look me up and down and make gestures and jokes, but

as soon as I wore the hijab, there was immediate respect; they opened doors and lowered their eyes or looked away, like men might have done twenty years ago.” The three women agreed that wearing a hijab is an outward sign that a woman is not available, not available for anything, not even for viewing. I was surprised to find that these new acquaintances actually like wearing their scarves. Sho Sho explained that in the presence of boys younger than herself she doesn’t have to have her head covered, but males her age and older cannot see her hair. It is actually the hair that is being kept covered, not the head. Not even a curl or wisp of hair is allowed to be seen. Apparently Muslims decide from country to country or community to community how much of a woman’s body is to be covered, but the hijab is law. Muhammad Khouj (1994) writes, “The Prophet set the standards of dress that would protect women from harassment. When society begins to treat women differently and pictures them contrary to their nature, it reduces their humanity. So often we see women reveal themselves immodestly in the name of freedom, progress, and advancement. They become exploited to the extent that they begin to lose their dignity. This type of exposure is contrary to the beautiful nature and character Allah intended for them (p 273).” Even so, the Quran does not require women to wear a hijab!

### ***The Bigger Picture***

This conversation dispelled my idea that Muslim men were forcing wives and daughters to cover their heads. It appears that Muslim women like covering up and feel safer doing so. Geneive Abdo, author on Islamic faith, writes that the Islamic revival in Egypt was having a profound effect on the spirit and values of ordinary people. Abdo

says, "I found my first clues in the two or three taxi drivers I met each day I roamed the city (Cairo, Egypt). The behavior of the drivers, who were always male and most of the time no older than forty, followed either one of two predictable patterns. If I heard cassettes on the tape player of popular shikhs or religious music, if the drivers were dressed in a gallabiyya, the Islamic tunic, I felt at ease. Unlike those who played Egyptian pop music, attached photographs of bikini-clad women to their dashboards, contorted their necks to stare at my legs as I sat in the back seat, or adjusted their mirrors to fix their eyes on my face, hoping the unmanned steering wheel would find safe passage through the chaotic traffic, the men of religion were interested only in driving (p37)."

From speaking with Fattmah and her children and the American-Muslim women, I see intelligent, well-educated women who believe they are doing what they do for Allah first of all, and secondly for their husbands and fathers. These women would probably be labeled liberal if compared to Muslims in countries with rigid, fundamentalist leaders like Iran or Iraq. In 1994 a group of young men-Islamic students, or Taliban-rose up against lawlessness in the city of Kandahar and in the name of Allah the Beneficent, this Taliban, as members of the movement came to be known, killed or drove off all criminals. They proceeded to confiscate all weapons and promised that they would protect the citizens. They enforced Islamic law as they saw it: they banned photographs, education for girls, and music. They demanded that women cover their faces in the street and leave home only in the company of a close male relative. All men found themselves required to grow beards and could be sent to prison for ten days if they shaved. In keeping with the Quran, the Taliban amputated the right hand of thieves, (Miller and Kenedi, 2002)). This,

Fattmah agreed, was extremist.

I must admit that the Muslims I know appear to exhibit a more unadulterated faith than their Christian counterparts. Again, within the Christian and Muslim faiths there's a religious continuum of variations on adherence to orthodoxy; from fanatical zealots to liberal reformers. Human nature is weak and often succumbs to the ego. All have an opinion. Some willingly bend their will to God, others do so only by force. It looks to me as if Christians do much out of guilt and Muslims out of respect. One wonders if a simple act of kindness from a good heart isn't more honest and pure than all the religious acts of dictated faiths.

### ***The Prophet Muhammad***

Another day when Fattmah and I met to discuss writing a book together I confessed to her that I had begun to research Islam because I didn't know much about her faith. I told her from the little I had already read, I felt that if Jesus and Muhammad sat at a table together to talk religion, they would agree on many things. She smiled and told me that no one can be a Muslim unless they believe in all the prophets from Abraham to Jesus. However, she added, Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last Prophet of God and that he delivered to mankind the final word from God in the Quran.

According to Islamic scholar Karen Armstrong (2002), the Quran constantly points out that Muhammad had not come to cancel the older religions, to contradict their prophets or to start a new faith. His message is the same as that of Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, or Jesus, and that today, Muslim scholars argue that had Muhammad known about the Buddhists or the Hindus, the Australian Aborigines or the Native

Americans, the Quran would have endorsed their sages too, because all rightly guided religion that submitted wholly to God, refused to worship man-made deities and preached that justice and equality came from the same divine source. Fattmah said that Muhammad never asked Christians or Jews to accept Islam, and the Quran states that there shall be no coercion in matters of faith.

In 570 A.D .Muhammad ibn Abdallah was born into the leading tribe of Mecca, the Quraysh, and was a part of the Banu Hashim clan. This set Muhammad among powerful leaders of Makkah, in the chief trading center of the Arabian peninsula. According to author Akbar Ahmed these were cruel, violent times; tribes were in constant conflict, the weaker members of Arabic society were at the mercy of others and women were synonymous with slaves. Female infanticide was common. Society was on the brink of anarchy and disorder.

By the time Muhammad was six years old, both his parents had died. The orphan lived with his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib for two years until the man died. He was then raised by his uncle, Abu Talib, a merchant in the busy city of Makkah. The melancholy boy tended sheep in the desert.

As he grew Muhammad earned the name al-Amin “the honest one.” A wealthy business woman of noble birth asked the young Muhammad to marry her although she was fifteen years older than him. Life was relatively quiet until 610 when Muhammad was praying and fasting as usual in his retreat in a cave on Mt. Hira. Awakened from sleep, Muhammad was seized by a tremendous force that enveloped him and nearly forced all the air out of his lungs. Repeatedly the force commanded, “recite”, and repeatedly the terror-stricken man answered , “no.” Finally when Muhammad felt he

would die, he answered, “yes.” Muhammad rushed to his wife, Khadijah, and told her he was either crazy or that he had seen an angel. She took her husband to see a Christian cousin who she said would know about angelic visits and be able to tell them if this was a heavenly visit or not. The cousin affirmed that indeed Muhammad had seen the angel Gabriel, and that he was a new prophet. Muhammad received revelations and preached for twenty-three more years until his death in 632.

Muhammad’s initial messages to the Arabs of Makkah were met with disbelief and mocking, but in time after Muhammad continued to receive messages on Mt Hira, the Arabs began to listen and the Prophet Muhammad and Islam were established.. The term Islam means “one who submits.” Most Arabs at this time worshipped deities such as Hubal, a war god, and the three daughters of Allah, the divine lord of the Haram. Gordon (2002).

Hearing the young Muhammad preach a monotheistic faith, angered many merchants of Makkah whose financial security depended upon their thriving businesses of selling idols and religious trinkets to pilgrims visiting the pagan shrines as well as making money at the expense of some of the tribe’s poorer families. The businessmen became desperate to rid Makkah of Muhammad. Not only was Muhammad interfering with business, but he was undermining the religious authority of the Quarish as leaders of the old tribal faith. Arabs knew that Judaism and Christianity, which were practiced in the Byzantine and Persian empires, were more sophisticated than their own pagan traditions. (Armstrong, 2002). Violent attacks didn’t stop the prophet nor did he succumb to their offers of wealth and leadership to stop his preaching.

When whispers of assassination were heard, the desert city of Yathrib (Medina) invited the Prophet Muhammad to come live there. This journey in 622 to Medina is called the hijra, and marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. It was here in Medina that Muhammad started his first Muslim community (Umma) and built the first mosque. Because Muhammad was teaching that all are equal in the eyes of God, many of his early followers were the poor and the downtrodden of society, much the same as Jesus and the early Christians. Even though Muhammad's message was a forceful proclamation to adhere to a new set of human rights which were unheard of in the Arab world, Islam grew.

There were holy wars and for a time Muhammad took up the sword to fight the pagan Arabs, but the prophet continued to preach peace until his death. His wife died in 619. Years later Muhammad took several widows into his home as his own wives. Muslims are sometimes criticized for the fact that Muhammad had many wives, but monogamy is expected today, unless there are extreme conditions under which a man may take up to four wives.

### ***The Quran***

Quran means "recitation." The archangel Gabriel commanded the Prophet Muhammad to recite the message of God and the Quran is the product of the twenty-three years of messages from Allah dictated by the faithful prophet. The Quran continues the Old and New Testaments, God's earlier revelations, and presents itself as their culmination.

This sacred book is written in Arabic and translations are not considered authoritative. Muslims will tell you that the Quran has never been altered, that it is the divine word of God. In fact, scholars point out that as the Christians see Jesus as divine because he is the son of God, a divine incarnation, Muslims see the holy Quran as a divine incarnation of Allah's words. The Quran is believed to be intrinsically holy in nature. Islam believes that the Bible was edited and manipulated for foul purposes by men of power and that Christ's message was compromised. The Quran, however, is seen as pure, unadulterated truth.

The Quran outlines the Five Pillars of Islam that are the core of the Muslim life, five essential and obligatory practices all Muslims accept and follow. Authors Brandon Toropov and Luke Buckles (1997) outline them as:

outlines them as:

1. Confession of one's faith in God and in his prophet Muhammad. This is called the shahada. By simply reciting the confession of faith with Muslims present as witnesses, one may become a Muslim. The confession of faith is: "There is no god but the God (Allah is Arabic for god) and Muhammad is the messenger of God." The shahada is also said throughout the day when the muezzin calls the faithful to prayer. Monotheism is never questioned in Islam. To associate anything else with God is the one unforgivable sin. Islam believes that Muhammad was God's last and final prophet, and his inspired words are to stand as God's final words to mankind. All Muslims strive to live a life modeled after the life of Muhammad.
2. Prayer. Ritual worship five times a day. After cleansing hands and face, the world's more than one billion Muslims daily turn to face the holy city of Mecca and



- pray no matter where they may be at the designated time. The Quran does not state a daily prayer time schedule, but Muhammad established prayer time to be at daybreak, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and evening. A series of prostrations accompany the scripted prayers. Children are not required to follow the daily prayer rituals, but may do so if they wish.
3. Almsgiving. A “purification” tax called a zakat is paid by all Muslim for the benefit of the poor. This is seen as a worship of God and service to the community. An annual payment of approximately two and one-half percent of an adult’s accumulated wealth is paid. The Qran calls for the tax to be distributed to care for the poor, orphans, widows, to free debtors and slaves, and to assist in the spread of Islam.
  4. Fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. This month-long fast occurs during the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, falling in summer of the Mid East from sunrise to sunset all Muslim men and women must abstain from food, drink, and sexual activity. Families will often eat a late evening supper, sleep a few hours, and rise before sunrise to eat a morning meal that must sustain them for perhaps sixteen hours. The Feast of the Breaking of the Fast called Id al-Fitr, follows Ramdan. Families celebrate exchanging gifts and feasting. Muslim children generally are not expected to fast, but they often remain home with their families during this time of celebration and thanksgiving.
  - 5 Pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime. Each year during the twelfth month of the Muslim calendar, millions of Muslims from all over the world travel

to the Holy City to perform the Pilgrimage, called the Hajj. The elderly and the very poor are excused from making the journey, but all adult Muslims are required to make the Hajj at least once in their lifetime. The focus of the pilgrimage is the Kaba, the cube-shaped House of God that holds the sacred black stone that was given to Abraham and his son Ismail. by the angel Gabriel and is a symbol of the covenant with Ismail and, by extension, the Muslim community. The Kaba was the object of pilgrimage during pre-Islamic times. Men and women wear simple white garments to emphasize the unity and equality of all believers. Non-Muslims are prohibited from taking part in this ceremony of days and nights of prayer and ritual and sermons. High above the throng, a preacher will recite Muhammad's call for peace and harmony among believers.

The pilgrimage ends with the three day Feast of Sacrifice (Id al-Adha), or the Great Feast, commemorating God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his son Ismail. Sheep, goats, camels and cattle are ritually sacrificed, some eaten during the feasting and most given to the poor. With nearly two million participants, Saudi Arabia has had to develop new methods of freezing, preserving and distributing the massive amount of meat.

There is great pride in those who make the hajj. So much so, that some Muslims add Hajji at the beginning of their names. A lesser pilgrimage called the umra is taken by some Muslims when visiting lesser holy sites, but it never replaces hajj.

Sometimes the jihad, "to strive to struggle" in the way of God, is unofficially considered the sixth pillar. Overall the jihad is a call to Muslims to lead virtuous lives and

to extend the Islamic community through preaching and education. It may also refer to a defense of Islam or holy war. Although jihad is not suppose to include aggressive warfare, it is a far too prevalent reality in today's world.

Traditionally, the Quran has been the focus of Islamic education, with young Muslims learning to read and write Quarnic verses and memorizing and reciting the entire text. Kawther M. Al-Minawi in her book The Child Rights in Islam (2003), states that, The Holy Quran is the root of knowledge. Reciting it, the little children gain good manners, purify their souls and acquire high morals.

Quranic recitation remains a cherished art form and recordings by noted reciters are readily available throughout the Islamic world. Gordon (p. 40). Even with the spread of secular public schooling, Muslim parents still try to make sure their children study the Quran. The Muslim children I have known through teaching an international student body at East Elementary, all attend Arabic school daily. sEven though many of these children, like Lujain, have lived in America most of their lives, they have learned to speak and write Arabic and receive a rigorous Islamic education in addition to their free public education.

### *East and West*

With two religions that are so very similar at their roots, literally from common descendants, why is there so much conflict and fear between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds? Even with both Muslims and Christians agreeing that there is one god that is the source of all creation and has given mankind instructions as to how to best live, to maneuver this physical world of dualities-of good and evil, even with their

fundamental beliefs in the same place, the message for both religions seems to more often than not, get lost in the details, in the telling, in the doing, in the application of the heavenly command to be at peace and love all. The Muslims will tell you that they wish to emulate Muhammad and his perfect ways. Christians will often say the same about wanting to live as Jesus did-with tolerance and love. So, with all the talk about love why is the world in such a horrific mess? Scholars and theologians offer answers, but they are all complex studies of social/economic/political factors that seem to not have improved even after two thousand years.

In Fattmah's home I did not bring up the "T" word. Not with the ladies. We were discussing scarves and bodies and beauty and ideas for the upcoming book project. Bringing terrorism into the room just didn't seem appropriate. The opportunity did arise a few days later when I met with Lujain and her thirteen year old sister, Sho Sho. The three of us had our own private interview in the quiet of the public library. Questions and answers flew around the table. They candidly painted a picture for me of what it is like to be a Muslim child in America, another book title. I asked Sho Sho about terrorism. By her well composed, thought out answers, I knew she'd had this discussion many times. She explained to me that in Islam suicide is bad. To kill oneself is inexcusable and the lowest level of heaven is for those Muslims who commit suicide. A boy had recently asked Sho Sho why she didn't have any tattoos. She told him it is against her faith to do any permanent harm to her body such as piercings or markings. She said that to a true Muslim who follows the Quran, any act of violence or harm is wrong. She further

explained that the Prophet Muhammad said not to kill. Therefore the acts of a suicide bomber are abhorred by the true Muslim.

As I suspected, terrorists are at the far ultra-leftist end of the Islamic spectrum. They're fanatics, crazy people driven by the usual weaknesses that drive all fanatics: fear, hatred and greed. Muslims fight and Non-Muslims fight, but terrorists start wars and find glory in doing so. The words "thug", "zealot", and "assassin" all come from ancient terror cults-Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim, respectively-that believed they were doing the work of God. In Zakaria's opinion terrorists are almost always misfits who place their own twisted morality above mankind's. The 9/11 terrorists were very different Muslims than the Al-Ghamdi family. In an article written for *Newsweek* in September of 2001 Zakaria stated that, "Every Islamic country in the world has condemned the attacks of September 11."

Nobel Laureate, Elie Wiesel,(2006) is stepping up his mission to combat religious fanaticism. Wiesel is the world's best-known Holocaust survivor. At 77 years old, Wiesel senses a pivotal historic moment, one that poses some of the greatest dangers since Nazi Germany. Wiesel has set in motion a series of Mideast initiatives because, in his words, "The shift began with the ultimate new weapon, suicide terrorists deployed globally on behalf of religious fanaticism and without qualms about mass casualties, p.A6). In his view, it has taken state form with an Iranian president who supports terrorism and is bent on developing nuclear weapons and exterminating Israel.

Wiesel (2006) reminds the world that the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by two totalitarian ideologies; political fanaticism in Moscow and racist fanaticism in Berlin.

Now we are facing a third fanaticism, religious fanaticism, which dominated the Middle Ages but is back and growing.

Mr. Wiesel's concerns are echoed in much of the world today. Unfortunately many world citizens live in small places and prefer even narrower points of view when talk turns to Islam. Just the word Islam can bring fear to people's minds as they envision dark, bearded men flying jets into the Twin Towers, or imagine Muslim husbands forcing their will upon their wives and daughters. The three Muslim females I met all told me they want people to see that the Muslim terrorists are a very small segment of a larger, tolerant faith. Unfortunately most Americans know nothing about Islam except what the media has presented to them. And we all know how dangerous it is to only have a one-sided perspective.

***What Happened Between the East and the West or The Farmer and the Factory***

Trying to explain the history of terrorism, or the origins of the strife between East and West is beyond the scope of this paper, but a cursory historical study of the past two thousand years reveals political, social, and economical patterns that have led to the East/West division, to the toxic conditions of today.

According to Armstrong (2002), one of the world's foremost scholars on the conflicts between Islam and the West, if we stand far back from the earth and get a bigger picture of the East we will see an Arab world with an ancient history. In the Arab mind the countries north of the Alps had for centuries been regarded as a backward region, which had attached itself to the Greco-Roman culture of the south and had, gradually, developed its own distinctive culture. Western Europe lagged far behind the Christian empire of

Byzantium, where the Roman Empire had not collapsed as it had in Europe. By the twelfth and thirteenth centuries these western European countries had just about caught up with the other core cultures, and by the sixteenth century had begun a process of major transformation that would enable the West to dominate the rest of the world. The achievement of such ascendancy by an out-group is unique. The Ottomans efforts to reorganize their armies along Western lines in the hope of containing the threat of Europe failed. To beat Europe at its own game, a conventional agrarian society would have to transform itself from top to bottom, and re-create its entire social, economic, educational, religious, spiritual, political, and intellectual structures. They would have had to change very fast.

The new society of Europe and its American colonies had a different economic basis. Instead of relying on a surplus of agricultural produce, it was founded on a technology and an investment of capital that enabled the West to reproduce its resources indefinitely, so the Western society was no longer subject to the same constraints as an agrarian culture. By the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century Westerners felt such assurance that they no longer looked back to the past for inspiration, but looked to the future.

This modernization of Western society required an increased population to work. some education was beneficial. More people were needed to buy the mass-produced goods, and to keep the economy going an increasing number of people had to live above the subsistence level. With education, more citizens demanded a say in government, even the segregated and marginalized groups like Jews. Here we see the

economic reason why the West separated church and state. Armstrong writes that religious differences and spiritual ideals were not allowed to impede the progress of society, and scientists, monarchs, and government officials insisted that they be free of ecclesiastical control. It was found that in order to be efficient and productive, a modern nation had to be organized on a secular, democratic basis.

The agrarian East was no match for the modern, scientific West. It was known that if societies did organize all their institutions according to the new rational and scientific norms, they became indomitable and the conventional agrarian states were no match for them. In Armstrong's historical picture we see a point is reached where East and West are separated, where the ancient agrarian cultures fall behind and are forced to watch the West speed forward, for good or for ill, into the future.

As Western economy grew and saturated homeland, new markets were needed And had to be sought abroad. This is where the Western states began to colonize outside modern Europe in order to draw others into their commercial network. This was a complex process that continues to this day; the colonized country provided raw materials for export to feed European industry. In return, it received cheap Western goods, which meant local industry was usually ruined. The colony also had to be modernized and brought into the Western system. In the colonies, only a select educated few ever understood the dynamics of modernity, most felt invaded and confused at the alien force. In Armstrong's words, "The vast majority of the population was left to rot in the old agrarian ethos Inside Islam (p171)." People felt lost in their own countries and felt they were no longer in control of their own destiny.



A June 19, 2006 article in the *Wall Street Journal* covers a phenomena in China this year where the marriage rate has increased by threefold because 2006, “is a good year to marry, it’s the year of the dog and a double spring (according to the Chinese lunar calendar).” However, the article says that, “Sociologists say that the wedding boom this year is part of a broader resurgence in traditional beliefs suppressed under Communist rule. They say it is fueled by the uncertainties of China’s shift to a free market economy. People feel like they are not in control, and they want to get help and blessings from supernatural forces for a good life.” This is exactly what Armstrong is saying, that when modernization and that means technology, moves into a previously agrarian culture, the masses are left feeling helpless.

Dr. Armstrong makes clear an issue that is a key element in the West understanding the East; the issue of how the modern world of the West has inadvertently pushed Islam towards fundamentalism, the breeding ground for terrorism. Armstrong explains in her book, *Islam; A Short History*, (2002) that Fundamentalism is a global fact and has surfaced in every major faith in response to the problems of our modernity; fundamentalist Judaism, fundamentalist Christianity, fundamentalist Hinduism, fundamentalist Buddhism, even fundamentalist Confucianism. This type of faith surfaced first in the Christian world in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century. Each form of fundamentalism has its own symbols and enthusiasms, but its manifestations all have a family resemblance; they reveal a deep disappointment and disenchantment with the modern experiment. They also are fearful that the secular establishment will wipe them out.

Basically, Armstrong says that a fundamentalist group will form within a society not as a knee jerk response to the advent of Western modernization, but takes place when the modernization process is quite far advanced and people's efforts to reform their traditions and effect a marriage between them and modern culture fail. Of the three monotheistic religions, Islam was the last to develop a fundamentalist strain when modern culture began to take root in the Muslim world in the late 1960s and 1970s. Today disoriented young Arab men, with one foot in the old world and another in the new, now look for a purer, simple alternative

Armstrong, (2002) says that all fundamentalist feel that they are fighting for survival, and because their backs are against the wall, they can believe that they have to fight their way out of the impasse. In this frame of mind, on rare occasions, some resort to terrorism. The vast majority, however, do not commit acts of violence, but simply try to revive faith in a more conventional, lawful way (p166).

### ***The Recent Rage***

Apparently the Arab rage against America is relatively recent, and that in the 1950s and 1960s it seemed impossible that the United States and the Arab world would end up locked in a cultural crash. Egyptian journalist Mohammed Heikal describes the mood at the time: "The whole picture of the United States...was a glamorous one. Britain and France were fading, hated empires. The Soviet Union was 5,000 miles away and the ideology of communism was anathema to the Muslim religion. But America had emerged from World War II richer, more powerful and more appealing than ever. Even as I traveled in the Middle East in the 1970's, the image of America was of a glistening,

approachable modernity; fast cars, Hilton hotels, and Coca-Cola (p.25).”

Something happened in these lands in the past thirty years. Zakaria explains that the Middle East of the 1950s desperately wanted to become modern. The very Westernized modern ruler of Egypt, Gamel Abdel Nasser, was also the undisputed leader of the Middle East, and every regime followed him right into failure. Regimes chose bad ideas and implemented them in worse ways. Socialism produced bureaucracy and stagnation, economies never moved on, republics calcified into dictatorships. Arab unity cracked and crumbled as countries discovered their own national interests and opportunities. Worst of all, Israel humiliated the Arabs in the wars of 1967 and 1973 . When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, he destroyed the last remnants of the Arab ideas. In an almost unthinkable reversal of a global pattern, almost every Arab country is less free than it was thirty years ago. Why?

According to Zakaria disillusionment with the West is at the heart of the Arab problem. The idea is pretty well summed up in a conversation Zakaria had with an elderly Arab Intellectual. Zakaria asked the man why the governments in the Middle East had been unable to liberalize their economies and societies in the way the East Asians had done, like Singapore, Hong Kong, and Seoul. The man quickly replied, “ Look at them. They have simply aped the West. Their cities are cheap copies of Houston and Dallas. That may be all right for fishing villages. But we are heirs to one of the great civilizations of the world. We cannot become slums of the West (p160).”

### *What Can We Do?*

Wars continue even though there is wealth enough to satisfy the entire human population. There are no easy answers. The French journalist, Richard Labeviere, tells us that American money supports the Taliban that creates terrorists that creates wars that in turn drive the economy; and all this for oil? He sketches a map of a complex political network of international crime co-mingling with world governments.

On a more simple level I believe the only sane choice for the future is to increase human connections and understanding through the sharing of cultures and exchange of ideas, through interfaith dialogue. Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf (2004) writes, “ Americans must outgrow the unbecoming arrogance that leads us to assert the America somehow own a monopoly on goodness and truth-a belief that leads some to view the world as but a stage on which to play out the historical drama: the United States of America versus the Powers of Evil” (p.23). He states that once we define as evil those who counter us, we lose the moral high ground and begin to descend an exceedingly slippery ethical slope. If we truly believe that God is on our side, rather than making sure that we are on God’s side, we slip into the illusion that sees no measure as too extreme-a delusion that captivates every extremist heart.

My hope in writing a children’s book is to offer the reader a peek into the lives of two little girls, one Muslim and the other non-Muslim. Through friendship, the girls discover the commonality in their seemingly different lives. The world’s children must learn that what religions teach is absolutely true-that we are all part of the human family. We are indeed brothers and sisters.

*The Red Scarf (Manuscript in English)*

This is my best friend Lujain.

This is me, Lucy.

Lujain wears a hijab.

Everyday her scarf is a different color.

All her scarves are beautiful.

My favorite is a red one with yellow flowers.

Lujain tells her mother how much I like her red hijab.

The next day, Lujain has a present for me!

The long silky scarf is not like my warm wooly winter scarf.

You can see it takes practice.

Lujain has to teach me how to wrap it around my head.

When Lujain and I wear our scarves on the same day

People ask us if we're sisters.

We giggle and say, "No."

When they ask us why we're wearing a scarf,

Lujain says that she wears a hijab because it pleases Allah.

I answer that I wear my red scarf because my best friend gave it to me!

Title: The Red Scarf

العنوان: الحجاب الأحمر

This is my best friend Lujain.

هذه لجين من أعر أصدقائي.

This is me, Lucy.

هذه أنا لوسي.

Lujain wears a hijab.

لجين ترتدي الحجاب.

Everyday her scarf is a different color.

كل يوم ترتدي حجابا بلون مختلف.

All her hijabs are beautiful.

كل حجاباتها جميلة.

My favorite is a red one with yellow flowers.

أحبها لدي الأحمر ذو الأزهار الصفراء.

Lujain tells her mother how much I like the red hijab.

لجين تخبر امها عن مدى إعجابي بحجابها الأحمر.

The next day, Lujain has a present for me!

في اليوم التالي، لجين أحضرت لي هدية!

The long silky scarf is not like my warm wooly winter scarves.

الحجاب الطويل الحريري ليس كأحجبتني الدافئة للشتاء.

Lujain has to teach me how to wrap it around my head.

يجب ان تعلمني لجين كيف الف الحجاب حول رأسي.

You can see it takes practice.

تستطيع ان تراه أنه يحتاج إلى تدريب.

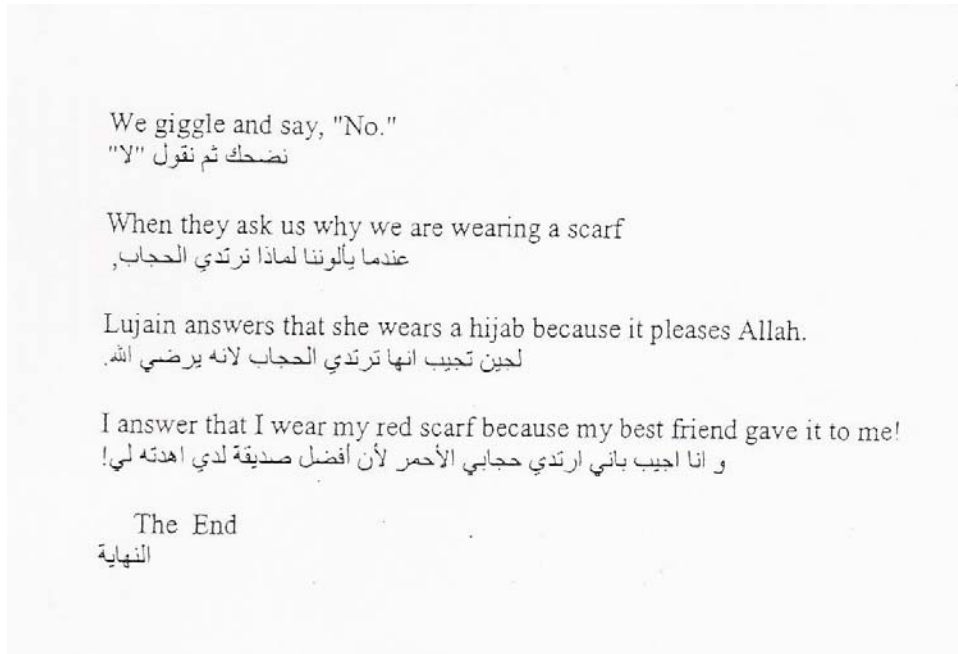
When Lujain and I wear our scarves on the same day

عندما لجين وأنا ترتدي احجبتنا في ذات اليوم،

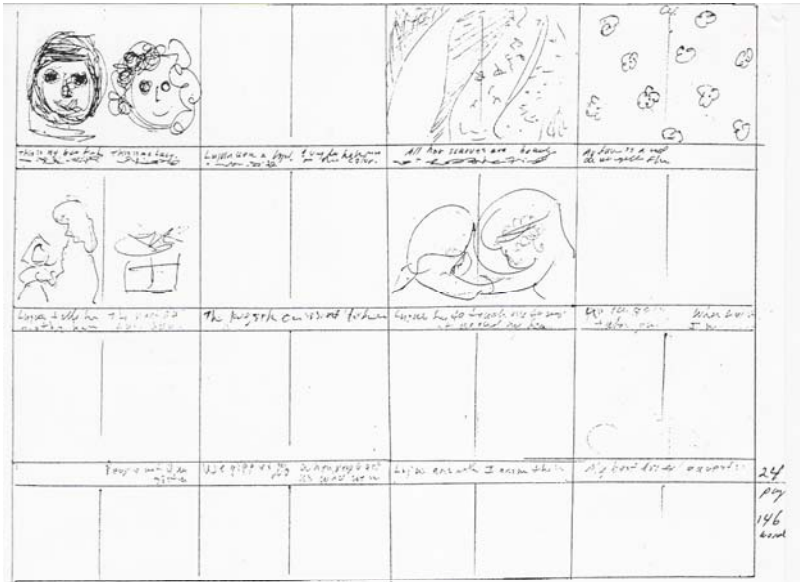
People ask us if we're sisters.

الناس يسألوننا إذا كنا أخوات.

**Figure 3.1. continued on the following page**



**Figure 3.1. *The Red Scarf* (Manuscript in English and Arabic)**



This is my best friend Lujain. The Red Hijab ?  
 This is me Lucy.  
 Lujain wears a hijab.  
 Everyday her scarf is a different color.  
 All her scarves are beautiful.  
 My favorite is a red one with yellow flowers.  
 Lujain tells her mother how much I like her red hijab.  
 The next day, Lujain has a present for me!  
 The long silky scarf is not like my warm wooly winter scarves!  
 Lujain has to teach me how to wrap it around my head.  
 You can see it takes practice.  
 When Lujain and I wear our scarves on the same day!  
 People ask us if we're sisters.  
 We giggle and say, "No."  
 When they ask us why we're wearing a scarf  
 Lujain answers that she wears a hijab <sup>because it</sup> please Allah.  
 I answer that I wear my red scarf because <sup>my</sup> ~~my~~ <sup>best friend</sup> gave it to me!

The pictures are what would keep a child reading back.

Figure 3.2. Dummy for *The Red Scarf*



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## **Chapter Four: Trends in Formats, Genre, and Media in Children's Literature**

Technology is driving the publishing industry to move faster and to reach farther than it ever has. Innovations are obsolete before they have a chance to grow old. In a global entertainment industry, ideas fly through the Ethernet at the speed of thought. Today's young people take technological equipment for granted and consume a constant diet of visual stimulation. New formats, genres, and visual presentations are constantly being created.

### *A Rationale for The Graphic Novel: New Literature for a New Reader*

Although a legitimate genre by its own merit, "graphic novel" was not a household phrase three years ago when I started this research. What came to my mind when I first heard the term was to think of a large comic book. After further study, I realized that idea was a gross simplification of a relatively complex literary form. This research introduced me to the hottest topic in the world of children's literature.

As an Intervention Specialist in the Athens public schools I work with children who have learning disabilities. Ninety-five percent of my students are boys ages eight to twelve. To say they are reluctant readers is a kind way of saying they hate to read. Finding ways to make reading and writing fun is an ever-increasing chore for me. When these boys visit the library they always reach for either larger non-fiction, science, exploration, adventure titles like the D.K. publications with elaborate, gorgeous illustrations, or they'll go for beautifully illustrated fantasy. Either way, they learn visually. This fact cannot be stressed enough. So, my intent in doing this research was

that I might discover a new learning tool. Author Aviva Rothschild (2000) states the virtues of the graphic novel:

Graphic novels use words and pictures in ways that transcend ordinary art and text, and their creators are more than writers and artists. The artist must have a director's eye for shadow, angle, setting, and costume. The writer has to know when the text speaks and when the art speaks, avoiding redundancy. In an ideal graphic novel, the text does not distract from the art or vice versa; the eye flows naturally from element to element, creating a whole that a text-only book cannot match. (p.59).

I found this statement by Francisca Goldsmith (1999) pertinent to my own educational interests in the graphic novel as a teaching tool for reluctant readers:

A graphic novel is a literary piece that calls on its reader to use both analyzing and synthesizing skills and asks more involvement on the part of the reader, not less. Graphic novels require active, critical participation by the reader, who must not only be able to decode text but also follow its flow and grasp the essentials of narrative, mood, character, or plot through images. The reader must then be able to meld parts into a unified whole. Giving teens access to materials that help them develop their critical skills and aesthetic appreciation is part of the charge of the adult responsible for young adult collections. (p.187).

In my paper I refer to the graphic novel as "the new literature", and the kid's of the tech-age as the, "new reader." Eliza Dresang in her novel *Radical Change* (1999), says that today's youth, whom she calls the Net Generation, "have grown up on a constant diet

of technology easily grasping meaning from screens and bits that Baby Boomers view as chaotic or as irrelevant as hieroglyphics. The kid's minds can handle nonlinear, random information and make sense of it" (p.29). I would go a step further and say that technology is forming young minds and senses to be high-strung, impatient fact-finders. They don't want to have to search for information, they want it now! They don't want to have to read a novel, they want to know the story now! They don't want to do research or write a paper, for them a page or two taken off the Internet should suffice.

I see a bright future for the graphic novel because it is not only special education students that are in need of an alternative literary experience. The other ninety-two percent of the American school kids who are supposedly able learners, are choosing large format books with prolific illustrations and very little text. Sullivan (2002) adds that the short, quick, visual format of the graphic novel is attractive to a generation that has become visually oriented with media such as television, computer games, and the Internet. I do believe that the graphic novels and other multi-layered, non-linear texts, will grow in demand.

### *Le Novel Graphique*

A graphic novel by any other name is still a graphic novel, because no matter what language the books are printed in, the pictures carry the story, and pictures are a universal language. Although a legitimate genre by its own merit, "graphic novel" is not a household phrase you hear everyday. What came to my mind upon first hearing the term was to think of a large comic book. After further study, I realized that idea was a gross simplification of a relatively complex literary form.

### ***What is a Graphic Novel?***

*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defines the word graphic as, "1. formed by writing, drawing, or engraving, 2. marked by or capable of clear and lively description or striking imaginative power, 3. relating to the pictorial arts." Novel is defined as "an invented prose narrative that is usually long and complex and deals especially with human experience through a connected sequence of events." An ALA Reader's Advisory book on science fiction and fantasy calls graphic novels, "bound collections of superhero comics (62)." This is a true definition, but a grossly limited one. Author, Keith DeCandido (1990), defines graphic novels as "a self-contained story that uses a combination of text and art to articulate plot. It is equivalent in content to a long short story or short novel and in some ways a larger version of a comic book (p.50)." This definition is more accurate, but you have to see it to believe it!

Eliza Dresang, in her book *Radical Change* (1990), offers this definition, "The graphic novel resembles the comic book in form and format, with a series of panels containing words and pictures. One might say it is a literary comic book, or a hybrid between a text based novel and a comic book (p. 96)."

So, it appears we have a book that would tell a story through drawings and words. And most graphic novels are indeed a sophisticated balance between picture and word, with both working equally hard to convey the story. Sullivan (2002), states the virtues of the graphic novel:

Graphic novels use words and pictures in ways that transcend ordinary art and text, and their creators are more than writers and artists. The artist must have a

director's eye for shadow, angle, setting, and costume. The writer has to know when the text speaks and when the art speaks, avoiding redundancy. In an ideal graphic novel, the text does not distract from the art or vice versa; the eye flows naturally from element to element, creating a whole that a text-only book cannot match. (Books For The Reluctant Reader, Sullivan)

Some graphic novels have no words at all like Eric Drooker's story, *Flood: A Novel in Pictures*. This book printed in 2002 was a New York Times Editor's Choice and an American Book Award Winner. Other graphic novels have extensive text, but all graphic novels have prolific illustrations. Apparently graphic novels are very popular in Europe and have been a legitimate literary genre for several decades. I read that Belgian novels are especially good, and that the art is superior to other countries. I asked a good friend, in Turnhout, Belgium what she knew of graphic novels. She explained that graphic novels are called "strips" in Belgium. There is an endless variety in these, from innocent children's books (*Suske en Wiske, Jommeke and Nero*, to pornographic ones like (*Roode and Asterix*) to the action (*Lurgo Wynch & XIII*) and mystery (*Niklos Koda, Jessica Blandy and Soda*) I would say that it has evolved over the years. Sometimes the story is told in one edition, but often times you have the story told in episodes. A lot of them have been translated into many languages. .

### ***History of the Graphic Novel***

Graphic novels are not new, they are however a twenty-first century Metamorphosis of the traditional comic book, grown-up comics, with origins back to the Depression era "funnies." To better appreciate this modern day art/literary form, it's

important to understand the past eighty years of comic book growth. Comic books began in the Depression-weary 1933, the year Hitler came to power and Europe was facing turmoil. Author Nicky Wright (2000), points out that at this time in history people the world over needed to laugh, to forget the gray realities of their day-to-day existence, trying to put food on the table and picking up whatever work they could find-if they were lucky enough. At least after supper the family could chuckle over *Funnies on Parade*, a 8 by 11 inch full-color comic that reprinted Sunday newspaper comic strips such as *Joe Palooka* and *Mutt & Jeff*. The book's 36-page format was sold to Procter & Gamble who purchased 10,000 copies to be given away as premiums to their customers. The owners of this comic book company, Eastern Color, realized they were on to a good thing and decided to stick a ten-cent price on a few dozen comics and put them out for sale on the newsstands. All the copies sold within two days. Americans loved comics!

Other publishers were taking note of this new market, and new and original material began to appear. *Superman*, the most famous comic book hero of all, debuted in 1938, followed by *Batman* in 1939, and *Captain Marvel* in 1940. It was during World War II that the most creative art appeared in comic books even though comic book artists were at the bottom of the art world. If an otherwise respectable artist did some comic book illustrating on the side, he kept it a secret. Europeans were much more appreciative of the art of cartooning, and still are to this day. As mentioned earlier, my friend's son is studying cartoon and graffiti art at the Brussels Art Academy.

Up until and during World War II, comics usually featured funny animals, or superheroes bashing the Nazis and Japanese. Post-war comics became increasingly



salacious and violent. Wright (2000), explains that without a war to fight, the superheroes that were left took to fighting crime, and western comics invariably found the heroes dealing with cattle rustlers or gun fighters who were criminals in a romantic setting. The popular comics were *True Crime Comics*, *Crime Suspense Stories*, *Crime Patrol*, and even an adult only comic, *Murder Incorporated*. Crime was in as well as sexy jungle girls in the late 1940's. Superheroes and funny animals were replaced with the likes of *Zoot Comics* and *All Top Comics* that featured Phantom Lady and Rulah, the sexy jungle goddess. *Young Romance* was the first romance comic to appear on American newsstands in 1947. It included its share of risqué material and came with an "Adults Only" warning. Other adult subjects came on the scene as in *Battle Action* comics, which followed the Korean war in 1950 with unshaven, killing-machines and names like Battle Brady and Combat Kelly fought against communist. During these years, horror and terror comics abounded. Drugs, crime, sex, and violence were available for a dime.

In 1948, troubled with increasing public criticism, a dozen comic book publishers came together to form the Association of Comics Magazine (A.C.M.P.) with the intent of regulating their business. The president of the association was reported to have said that, "we are on trial in the court of public opinion. Our defense is this code of minimal editorial standards designed to result in production of comic magazines, which are interesting, exciting, dramatic...and clean.

This group created a comic code that banned sadistic torture and bias against any religious or racial group, no female was to be portrayed wearing anything less than a standard bathing suit, crime would not be shown as glamorous, authority would not be

defined as stupid, and details about how crimes were executed, all were forbidden. A five-pointed star would be displayed on the front of comics that adhered to this code. Parents began to feel that their youth could safely read comics again. Unfortunately, as time passed, many of the comics featuring the star and code, were worse instead of better. There appeared to be no stopping crime and violence.

One publisher, Dell, produced the best range of funny animal comics that were beautifully illustrated and well-written. They published wholesome entertainment for the three to ten year old child, with characters like Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Lassie, and Zorro. These comics were seen to be as good reading as Dr. Seuss and Golden Books. They also sold twice as many comics as any other publisher. Fawcett Publications also catered to the younger reader with their characters Captain Marvel, Captain Marvel Jr., Captain Midnight, and Tom Mix. National Comics Publications aimed to please an older reader ages eight to fifteen with Superman, Batman, the Green Lantern, and Flash.

Though the publishers offering readers a steady diet of sex, sadism, racism, and violence were a minority, their provocative publications gave the entire comic book industry a bad name.

During the late 1940's and the early 1950's, the most influential and important comic was E.C., Entertaining Comics, *Terror* series. The first issue in December 1949, introduced the horror character the Vault Keeper. Horror and mystery themes became an instant success, so much so that *Tales from the Crypt* and *Vault Keeper* were to become classics of the comic book world. Horror was soon joined by weird science and weird fantasy themes. By 1954 there had been over 100 different horror comic titles, with a

total of 2400 issues published between 1950 and 1954. Over 60 million comics were being sold every month.

However lucrative the market, the public could stand it no longer, and in 1954 there was an outcry from parents, police, and teachers with concerns of subject matter like sado-masochism, sexual domination, perverted fantasy, and violence that children could buy at the corner drugstore. Legislation was being passed in several states banning the sale of horror and crime comics. Canada prohibited them, as did some European countries.

The development of the comic book was not without setbacks and controversy. In the early 1950's, Dr. Frederic Wertham wrote *Seduction of the Innocent*, and attacked the comic industry by stating that all comics were destructive and dangerous to young minds. The American public panicked. Parents were burning their children's comic books. People will do strange things when they are fearful. You would have thought that after the horrible book-burnings in the 1930's people would think twice about such an act, however, even the author Nicky Wright (2000), remembers, "*Seduction of the Innocent* brought about the end of my first comic book collection. Having read this horrific tome on the evils of the American comic book, my parents ordered the gardener to burn my precious treasures. Mr. Finch dutifully obliged and I watched tearfully as *Captain Marvel*, *Superman*, *Justice Traps the Guilty*, and *Ringo Kid* were cast into the bonfire's hungry flames."(p.2).

Wertham (2000), and the U.S. media collaborated to extinguish the violent nature of the lowly comic book, to regulate comic book content and free American youth from

the effects of skimpily-clad jungle girls, horror, drugs, and crime. A Senate Subcommittee held hearings in which Dr. Wertham and leaders of the comic book industry had opportunities to speak. Wertham singled out Batman and Robin's relationship as thinly veiled homosexual wish-fulfilment that could easily lead adolescent boys astray. In defense of the comic book, William Gaines explained that, "The comic book industry employs thousands of writers, artists, engravers, printers. It has weaned hundreds of thousands of children from pictures to the printed word. It has stirred their imaginations, given them an outlet for their problems and frustrations...but most important, given them millions of hours of entertainment." Gaines went on to give his opinion, "I do not believe that anything that has ever been written can make a child hostile, over-aggressive, or delinquent. The roots of such characteristics are much deeper" (Wright, p.210).

The committee made the decision to not recommend legislation or federal intervention. They did, however, say that the comic book publishers had a moral right to clean-up their act.

However gloomy the future had looked for *Superman*, *Jungle Comics*, and much despised publications like *True Crime* and *Horror Comic*, the panic-stricken censorship of the fifties led to the renaissance of the early sixties. Although the first comics to emerge after the government comic cleansing were bland and utterly boring for teenage boys, companies like Entertaining Comics, E.C., replaced horror and crime comics with titles like *Piracy*. *Mad* magazine had also made its debut and was hugely successful. In 1961 Stan Lee created a highly original team of superheroes: The Fantastic Four. Over the years Lee and artist Steve Ditko went on to create Iron Man, the Incredible Hulk, and

The Amazing Spiderman. Comic books slowly earned American approval as comics were being read all over the world. According to Wright, *Classics Illustrated*, a marvelous Gilberton publication, presented classical literature in comic book form and were so popular that they sold more issues in various languages than any other American magazine. By the mid-sixties, the comic book as a literary choice was off and running, and has continued to the present.

### ***The Graphic Novel is Born***

A further development in mass-marketed comic art came with the introduction of The graphic novel in the mid-1980's. A hugely successful blockbuster led the way: *Maus* by Art Spiegelman published in 1986, and earned him a Pulitzer Prize for his masterful Holocaust narrative which was followed by *Maus II* (1991). The praise it earned from critics for its literary merit enhanced the prestige of the comic form, lending much need legitimacy to the genre.

In 1993, Avi wrote *City of Light, City of Dark*, a mystery set in New York city, a graphic novel for young readers. The entire book is in black and white and as I read it, I couldn't help thinking that reading this novel was like watching a video. I believe that his idea is one of the major characteristics that draws young people to graphic novels.

### ***Graphic Novels Today***

My first exposure to the graphic novel was to do the research for this paper. I was fortunate to hear about a book-signing by a local author/artist, Stephen Richter, who self-published his own graphic novel entitled, *Smooog and the Eye of the Trillagryyn* (2005). This author paid to have two hundred copies made through Kinko's services. He would

of course, like to sell all these copies, but he's hoping that with his manuscript in print, he'll be able to interest an agent in his work, and from there find a publisher.

My first discussion about graphic novels was fortunately with Steven. I told him I had read that most graphic novels are for adults. In fact some of the books I found in my local library should have had a warning on the outside. *Bread & Wine: An Erotic Tale of New York* (1999), certainly was for a mature audience. And here, I point out my unconscious use of the word choice "audience" rather than "reader", because graphic novels do have a way of providing entertainment that borders on the experience of viewing a movie or video, much more so than an all-text handheld book. *The Beast of Chicago* (2003) with easy to follow illustrations was about a mass murderer. Steven said it's true that most graphic novels appeal to a teen and older audience but that they are being written for kids and he felt most definitely that his was suitable for elementary students.

I bought *Smoog* and sat down to read my first graphic novel. The book was difficult for me to finish. I've never enjoyed comics or jokes. Even as a child I found cartoons and comics tedious. So, I can't say I enjoyed his book, but I liked it much more than I thought I would. The important thing for me has been to discover this new genre, because these books truly open up a whole new world of reading and story for a generation of minds that need constant stimulation and entertainment. With my work of facing a dozen energetic, reluctant readers every day, I have a special interest in learning more about graphic novels and the motivation they may hold for my students with learning disabilities.

I believe the fact that the graphic novels have had their roots in children's comic books, gives them a stereotyped image of being simple, juvenile and an alternative to real literature. However, Edward Sullivan(2002), in his book, *Reaching Reluctant Young Adult Readers*, admits that graphic novels are, "a misunderstood medium among many librarians and teachers and, consequently, are dismissed without any serious consideration (p. 54)." According to Sullivan it is the graphic novel's roots in comic books that causes librarians to turn their noses up in disgust. He goes on to speak highly of graphic novels and believes they should be included in all schools and public libraries because they have a particularly strong appeal to teenage males; a demographic that has almost stopped reading handheld books.

I see graphic novels as a new art form that has developed out of the needs of the minds of the twenty-first century youth. I call them a literary collage because they are not just drawing, and they are not just print, they are a multi-layered expression, diverse and sophisticated, as any good literature or fine art should be.

### ***Why Twenty-first Century Youth Like Graphic Novels***

Graphic novels are in a comic book-like format. In addition, Sullivan (2002), says, "The appeal of comics to children and adolescents is simple: comics are easy and fun to read, they have simple vocabulary, few pages, stock characters, heroes worth idolizing, and exciting, action-packed stories (p.55)." There's also the fact that many graphic novels deal with edgy topics that teens seek out.

I have a special interest in graphic novels because I teach special education and I see an opportunity to use these books to visually entice and entertain the reluctant

readers I work with. Ninety percent of my students are boys ages eight to twelve, who have a learning disability in the area of language arts, specifically reading. They loath reading and they hate writing even more. To these boys, words are bad and pictures are good. It's as simple as that. A black and white issue. Reading experts agree that ages ten to eleven are a period for a last ditch effort to turn children into readers. Many educators agree that often students lose interest in reading at about twelve years old.

Hours spent on their home computers are mostly a consumption of visual information. They may have to read a little text here and there, but their overall experience is a visual one. One of my students may spend 10 to 15 hours a week on a home computer, not to learn to write, but to play games.

I watch the boys in my classroom, and when they can choose a book during free-time, they never pick up stories on their reading levels. What they always reach for are either larger non-fiction, science, exploration, adventure topics like D.K. publications with gorgeous illustrations, or they'll go for beautifully illustrated fantasy. Either way, they learn visually. This fact cannot be stressed enough!

I noticed that Gary Paulsen, the distinguished author of many critically acclaimed books for young adults, has a new novel called, *The Time Hackers*. I would place this novel on Dresang's list of Radical Change books because it centers around bad guys dealing in strange techno-practical jokes, where they've hacked into the time line, and things from the past keep appearing in the present. In *The Time Hackers*, Paulsen has written a nonlinear, multi-dimensional novel.



Graphic novels could give these students an opportunity to learn from both text and illustrations if they find subjects of interest. This is the key to learning today: subjects of interest! Sullivan wisely notes that the books for young reluctant readers should be relatively short, less than two hundred pages, and have an attractive cover. To this he adds that the book should be funny, scary, or suspenseful. He is absolutely right, and these characteristics could easily describe graphic novels.

Dresang (1998), in *Radical Change*, says that today's youth, whom she call the "Net Generation", have grown up on a constant diet of technology (computers, Internet, cell phones, I-Pods, and Walkmen) easily grasping meaning from screens and bits that Baby Boomers view as chaotic or as irrelevant as hieroglyphics. The kid's minds can handle nonlinear, random information and make sense of it. Actually, from my observations many children now, have almost gone so far as to not be able to stay with a plot long enough to comprehend an entire story. It is difficult for these young people to focus. Technology is forming young minds and senses to be high-strung, impatient fact-finders. They don't want to have to search for information, they want it now! They don't want to have to read a novel, they want to know the story now. They don't want to do research or write a paper of any length-they feel a few paragraphs taken off the Internet should suffice. Throw in a few photos downloaded off the Internet and voila-you have a report. This attitude is not only true of elementary students, college students are much the same. I would guess that left to their own devices ninety percent of college students would never write if they didn't have to. In my opinion, Dresang's Net Generation

doesn't want to work. They're used to instant information, instant connectivity, instant responses, instant food, instant information.

This winter a sixth grader I work with was supposed to make his own picture book. The teacher had explained to the class how to choose a story, build a plot, then to create illustrations and bind the book. The day the book was due, I asked this student to show me his picture book. To my horror, he reluctantly pulled out of his pants pocket three crumpled pages of black and white pictures printed off the Internet. To finish the book, he added a few rough sentences and that was it. Something is wrong with this scenario, and something is worse if teachers are accepting this level of work-disabilities or not.

I am not alone in my concern for the negative effects technology is having on our children. Within one week's time, I found two articles dealing with this vary issue; one was in *The Wall Street Journal*, and the other was in *The New York Times*. The titles of these articles said it all- "Parents Fret That Dialing Up Interferes With Growing Up", and "How to Unplug Your Kids." These are serious issues that are obviously getting the attention of concerned professionals as well as worried parents. Dresang (1998), sings the praises of technology in the lives of our children, and how the Net Generation is learning so much more than any other generation ever has because they have access to literally a world of information, and I agree with her to a degree, but I also think that as she wrote her book seven or eight years ago, she had no idea how pervasive technology would become, how insidious the ever-present "connectedness" would become, to the extent that if a child wants to they may never be alone or sit in silence. We now have a world where you can connect to sound, voices, wavelengths, 24 hours a day. This is the very

fact that is disturbing teachers and parents. One of the articles states that, “As kids log 6 ½ hours a day of screen time, parents worry their social skills are withering. The kids say, LOL!” I agree with Dresang that the technology that brought us the Internet that has brought us information. However, technology is addictive, and too much of a good thing may become an obsession.

With that said, I repeat whenever I can, whenever someone is listening, that children need books read in quiet time in safe places. Young children need a lap to sit on and a kind voice reading poetry and prose. We must never let technology replace human contact. And yes Eliza, being “connected” is great, but I want to know, and other parents need to ask, “to what is my child connected?”

### *The Future of Graphic Novels*

I see a bright future for the graphic novel because it is not only special education students that are in need of an alternative literary experience. The other ninety-two percent of the American school kids who are supposedly able learners, are choosing large format books with prolific illustrations and very little text, which usually ends up being non-fiction. These students are choosing graphics too. Classes read novels together, like *The Giver*, and discuss them as a group, but left on their own, rarely will a child be seen reading a novel by choice.

Sullivan (2002), comments that male or female, the short, quick, visual format of the graphic novel is attractive to a generation that has become visually oriented with media such as television, computer games, and the Internet. The nonlinear format of the graphic novel appeals to a generation of youth who are more accustomed to reading

hypertext on a computer screen than traditional, linear text. The text in word balloon bites appears to teens to be more like real conversation.

I don't for a minute believe that books, as we have known them for the past several centuries, will disappear anytime soon. I do, however, believe that the Radical Change books Dresang refers to, the graphic novels and other multi-layered, nonlinear texts, will grow in demand and be prolific as the changing minds of our technological world transform and be hunger for visual stories. I actually see a future where we enter into stories via movies and books that are three-dimensional experiences, where we see, hear, touch, smell, and vicariously enter other worlds.

#### *A Rationale for Children's Literature as Film*

The majority of this research is based on the work of Edward Jay Epstein (2005) author of *The Big Picture: The New Logic of Money and Power in Hollywood*. According to Epstein, in the entertainment world, all the money, power, and politics are played out with exquisite precision and exactitude to fulfill calculated goals. The money sign is the tip of the iceberg. Epstein writes, "Scratch a little bit and you'll find international corporate enterprises equal in breadth and power to any military industrial complex. For example, consider the vocabulary of the global entertainment industry: "advertising campaign", "publicity strategies", "target audience", "media lords", "multimillion-dollar blitzkriegs of television ads"(p. 39). Somehow it all sounds like power plays to gain control of territories, and that's just what the media industry is about, gaining control of global audiences. I went into much more depth with this idea to go as far as expressing my opinion that the six major studios have more interest in the children than just seeing

them as a market for videos and games. Children's films are a direct pipeline to sell not only things like Disney toys, but to sell ideas as well. I agree with Epstein that the ubiquitous tentacles of the media empires create today's popular culture. The six big entertainment giants produce most of the music, film and videos consumed by our youth. Viacom, Sony, Time Warner, Fox, Universal and Disney make up the world's communication monopoly.

This research opened my eyes to the world that exists behind the entertainment wall of Disney characters and movie stars, local newspapers and the evening news. Much of my prior Ph.D. research focused on my knowing more about my audience-children. This research focused my attention on the entertainment industry, which includes my target-the publishing world.

This research strengthened my conviction to write for children, and to always promote reading. The big six know they have a powerful tool in film and video. A child's mind is active when he reads a book or listens to a story being read. He is thinking. A child's mind is in an alpha state when they watch film or television. The alpha state is relaxed and receptive. It is basically a one-way street into a child's mind. That's scary. This aspect of movie going wasn't touched upon by Epstein, but you can be sure it figures into the advertising and marketing propaganda. I will go one step further and say I believe that children between birth and six years old should not be exposed to television and other forms of film when there is no control over what is seen. I believe we are damaging our children more than anyone can comprehend, more than anyone wants to know. For this reason I believe it is essential that we remain diligent in our assessment

and critique of the entertainment industry.

### *Children's Literature as Film*

The idea for this research paper was suggested to me by Dr. David Thomas, a film professor at Ohio University. I spent a good deal of time deciding how to approach the topic of children's books being made into contemporary film. Armed with a limited knowledge of film and some experience in the world of children's literature, I turned this topic into a question: "Why are children's books being made into films?" Initially, I answered with a curt reply, "Hollywood can't find any good stories; there's no real creativity anymore, so they're using tried and true children's classics." I felt pretty good about that answer and I planned to do enough research to back up my astute prognosis of the current Hollywood situation: the use of children's books in lieu of better material.

To some small extent it may be true that there is a lack of excellent stories for the Hollywood studios to choose from, so I had at least something vaguely correct, but there's a bigger reason, a far more sophisticated, organized, orchestrated answer, and that is money. The fact is, kids' movies make more money than any other genre of film.

Nearly everything in the world of entertainment is driven by money, either the making of it, or the spending of it. Saying that the entertainment world is about making money is mostly true with a few exceptions in the areas of politics and community etiquette, Hollywood-style. According to Edward Jay Epstein, author of *The Big Picture: The New Logic of Money and Power in Hollywood*, there is a powerful noneconomic logic of Hollywood. There are times when a studio will choose to obtain a desirable filmmaker who will take risks in creating more artistic movies, and the studios know

upfront these movies will not be blockbusters. However, these are the directors who win the Academy Awards, and such prestigious films (and directors) also give a studio its standing in the Hollywood community. The community members have a never-ending need for prestige, recognition, and creative expression.

Hollywood studios do care about their image, but only when the image serves their purposes. All the money, power, and politics are played out with exquisite precision and exactitude to fulfill calculated goals. The money sign is the tip of the iceberg. Scratch a little bit and you'll find international corporate enterprises equal in breadth and power to any military industrial complex. For example, consider the vocabulary of the global entertainment industry: "advertising campaign", "publicity strategists", "target audience", "media lords", and Epstein's statement, "first studios have to prepare the battlefields," and, "Even multimillion-dollar blitzkriegs of television ads can totally fail." Somehow it all sounds like power plays to gain control of territories, and that's just what the media industry is about, gaining control of global audiences.

Back to the question of why children's books are being made into films. I happened upon Epstein's book, and reading it has forever changed my view of the world, of media, and even my feeling about good old Walt Disney.

### ***The Good Old Days (Not That Good)***

In the early days of film, before television came onto the American scene, there were seven film studios: MGM, Paramount, Universal, Twentieth Century -Fox, Warner Bros., Columbia, and RKO. These seven studios, controlled by Jewish businessmen, "basically controlled what America saw and heard. In an average week in 1947, 90

million Americans, out of a total population of only 151 million, went to a movie, paying on the average forty cents for a ticket” (Epstein, p.3) The movies came from regional exchanges owned and operated by seven distribution companies that were, in turn, owned by the seven Hollywood studios. The heads of the studios controlled everything; the scripts, the filming, the lives of the contracted stars, the distribution of the films, and even the fan magazines. At this time the studios had one source of income: the American box office. The income totaled \$1.1 billion, which made movies, after grocery stores and automotive sales, America’s third-largest retail business (Epstein, 2005).

There was, however, one man who lived and worked outside of the Hollywood “box.” He had created his animation studio in the 1930’s and was considered an “oddball” by his Hollywood peers. After all, Walt Disney made cartoons, and what were cartoons good for except as short bits of childish entertainment in between a newsreel and the B feature movies. As Epstein (2005) explains, “Disney was working from a different concept: he believed that children, with adults in tow, could be the driving force of the entertainment industry” (p.12). In 1934, Disney had begun work on a feature-length cartoon that the chiefs of the conventional Hollywood studios derided as “Disney Folly”, it was called *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. At that time, the major studios believed that adults, not children, were the principal audiences for movies, and that cartoons, which usually ran no more than five minutes, were merely adjuncts used to entertain children during weekend matinees. So Disney’s announcement that he would make an eighty-three-minute animated cartoon from a Grimm’s fairy tale seemed like madness. Disney surprised them all. *Snow White* became the first film to gross \$100 million. Between 1937



and 1948 approximately 400 million tickets were sold. Children saw the feature length film over and over. The more traditional studios were forced to admit that making films for children was a serious business.

Not only was Disney reaping the benefits of his beloved cartoon-film, but he had the genius to turn his audiences into a market for cartoon character merchandise. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* was the first film to have a soundtrack, and the first film to have a merchandising tie-in. The movie had multiple licensable characters, as would all of Disney's films. Disney sold licenses to watchmakers, publishers, and toy makers for Mickey Mouse and for Snow White. Disney saw the boon that children represented: not only would they repeatedly see movies, but they would be eager consumers of products based on characters whose images excited them in movies (Epstein, 2005).

Disney had set the future path for the entertainment business; profits would come from using the films to create intellectual properties that could be licensed in other media over long periods of time. Epstein says, "By 2003 the Hollywood studios all came to realize-as Disney did half a century earlier-that the value they create lies not in the tickets they sell at the box office but in the licensable products they create for future generations of consumers" (p. 22).

### ***Children as Consumers: Where'd They Get All That Money?***

As late as 1980, most of the studios' worldwide revenues came from movie theaters and they were losing money on their overall movie business. Then came the video player, cable networks, pay T.V., and the DVD. Along with the change to home-entertainment came a shift in attention from adult audiences to children and teens.

By 2003 the studios brought in \$33 billion dollars, taking in almost five times as much revenue from home entertainment as from theaters, with the sale of more than a billion DVDs. Epstein (2005) comments that, “the film studios count on home entertainment sales to offset the massive losses from their film’s theatrical releases “(p.45).

Children’s films are a direct pipeline to market film paraphernalia: clothes, shoes, soundtracks, home videos, magazines, toys, books, bedding, dinnerware, and even vacations.

The new Hollywood of the 1980’s and 1990’s was developed by men like Lew Wasserman, Steve Ross, Akio Morita, Sumner Redstone, and Rupert Murdoch to fully exploit the global potential of Disney’s children-driven licensing system. Furthermore, the concept was further extended by a number of innovative entrepreneurs- including Steven Speilberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg, and David Geffen, who joined forces to create Dream Works SKG; Haim Saban, who, with Murdoch, built Fox Family Entertainment partly by Americanizing Japanese animation; and Robert Shay, who used a licensing windfall from Teenage Mutant Turtles to build New Line Cinema. This youth-driven entertainment made sense to financiers who were well aware that children between the ages of four and twelve provide an enormously rich market.

By 2003 the most important segment of the studios’ home-entertainment audience was children and teens, who use television sets for hours on end, either to watch programs on cable channels and networks or to play movie videos, music videos, and games. These younger consumers, prized by advertisers since they heavily influence their parents’ purchases, also buy many of the toys and much of the clothing and other paraphernalia licensed by the studios. Epstein (2005), states that Toy company, Hasbro

expected to make \$225 million from selling *Star Wars* paraphernalia.

The six studios have more interest in the children than just seeing them as a market for videos and games. Children's films are a direct pipeline to sell not only things, but ideas as well. The ubiquitous tentacles of the media empires create today's popular culture. In Epstein's words: "The six entertainment companies' sway over-and interest in-this young audience goes beyond the home-television market. They publish most of the books read by children, they record most of the music listened to by children-Disney alone accounting for 60 percent-they own most of the theme parks visited by children on their vacations, and they license most of the characters whose images appear in toys, clothes, and games consumed by children. To capture this valuable audience, studios no longer focus on making films that appeal mainly to grown-ups, as their predecessors from the studio-system days did. By 2003, all six Hollywood studios had adopted the strategy first foreshadowed by Disney sixty-six years earlier, when *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* appeared-making films specifically aimed at youth" (p. 21).

The studios have the same goal of making money, but their individual underlying values are reflected in their choice of films. Disney, for example, relies heavily on its wholesome family-entertainment image to attract parents to its theme parks, cruises, Disney Channel, and licensed products. Universal makes "event movies" like the movie *Jaws* that spawn attractions at theme parks and launch toys, games, and other licensable products. Paramount produces fare that resonates with the younger audiences, such as Nickelodeon, MTV, and other cable channels. They use simple characters in exciting situations like Indiana Jones in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Warner Bros.' movies are based

on comic book heroes from its DC Comics division, such as Batman and Superman that lead into a plethora of merchandise. News Corporation produces event films with enough general appeal to attract subscribers to its satellite service in Britain, Europe, Latin America, and Australia. Their Twentieth-Century Fox films produced eight of the ten most internationally successful films of the twentieth century including *Titanic*, *Star Wars*, and *Independence Day*. Sony's movies feature "action figures", especially figures that work well for electronic games played by teenagers. Epstein notes that there is a "common requisite to all the studios: characters who communicate principally not through words but through visually understood actions to a universal-and younger-audience" (p.333).

These six entertainment empires, Viacom, Sony, Time Warner, Fox, Universal, and Disney, with their parent corporations, make up the world's communication monopoly. They are cunning and breathtakingly brilliant in their acquisition and control over global markets. Their ubiquitous power has the potential to supercede governments, ethics, and at times, even international laws. They are the war lords of the world, the movie moguls, the kings of culture. These men, and, yes, the vast majority are men, possess insatiable appetites for more wealth through expansion and power. As Epstein admits, "the greatest rewards come from children and teens in the audiences" (p.20)

***Children's Films From Books: The Alchemy of Paper to Gold***

The studios have a "billion dollar club." The movies that qualify for club membership are remarkably similar in many ways. These films follow a similar Midas formula:

1. they are based on children's stories, comic books, serials, cartoons, or, in the case of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, a theme-park ride.
2. feature a child or adolescent protagonist.
3. have a fairy-tale-like plot in which a weak or ineffectual youth is transformed into a powerful and purposeful hero.
4. contain only chaste, if not strictly platonic, relationships between the sexes, with
5. no suggestive nudity, sexual foreplay, provocative language, or even hints of consummated passion.
6. feature bizarre-looking and eccentric supporting characters that are appropriate for toy and game licensing.
7. depict conflict (though it may be dazzling, large-scale, and noisy) in ways that are sufficiently nonrealistic, and bloodless, for a rating no more than a PG-13.
8. end happily, with the hero prevailing over powerful villains and supernatural forces (most of which remain available for potential sequels).
9. use conventional or digital animation to artificially create action sequences, supernatural forces, and elaborate settings.
10. cast actors who are not ranking stars—at least in the sense that they do not command gross-revenue shares. For his role in *Spiderman*, Toby Maguire, for example, though he was a well-established actor, received only \$4 million and a share of only “net profits” (which, it will be recalled, do not divert from the revenues flowing in to the clearinghouses). (p. 236)

The movies that made the billion-dollar club in the past five years in order of profits

are: *Harry Potter 1*, *The Two Towers*, *Finding Nemo*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Harry Potter 2*, *Spider-Man*, *The Return of the King*, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, and *The Phantom Menace*.

Of course it's cause to celebrate when a film grosses a billion dollars, but it doesn't make a lot of difference how much money the films make because as Epstein says, "Studios nowadays almost always lose money on current productions" (p. 19). Because as we know, what matters is the merchandising tie-ins that follow the films.

### ***Which Books Are Chosen to be Films?***

Epstein didn't go into this aspect of the movie industry. However, I believe there may be an assumption on the part of decision-makers, studio-heads who give the green light, that if a children's book has proven itself to be popular or even a classic and sold well, it would follow that the book as a film would sell well too. This reasoning is logical, however, I would argue that using the best in literature doesn't automatically guarantee the best in film. Massive audience attendance doesn't mean a film was excellent, or that it will become a classic. For example, every child and adult I know that was a Harry Potter fan, loved the books far more than the movies. We all went to see the movies and bought the videos. I even bought a Harry Potter board game, a Harry Potter journal for a child and a diary for another, I bought Harry Potter calendars and posters. I loved Harry. But as fun as the films and all the Harry memorabilia was, they did not and could not ever match the magical experience of reading the books. Why books have the potential to be far more magical than films is a topic for another paper. This issue probably wouldn't matter very much to a studio executive who would probably say,

“Fine, go read your books, just come see my film and buy the merchandise.” On second thought, it might matter to that executive if his company owned the publisher who made the book and the stores that sold the book. My point is that it’s not always true that a good book makes a good film. There is much lost in translation, just ask any kid!

Case in point: I think the film *The Polar Express* (2005) was an even more dramatic example with an even greater disparity between the popularity of the simple 32-page picture book versus the film that used grotesquely expensive motion capture technique in which humans serve as mere models for animation. Director Robert Zemeckis, with Warner Bros. Studios, shot scenes with action doubles in motion capture suits covered with miniature sensors so that each facial and body movement could be more realistically captured. Digital animators then converted the sequences to computer files, and digital composers blended them with the computer-generated settings, props, and visual effects (Epstein, 345)

I saw *The Polar Express* at Christmastime in a theater with two hundred school children. I watched the reactions on their faces; they laughed when it was funny and they gasped when it was scary, but in the end, most of the older children I interviewed for this research didn’t really like the film. The younger five and six year olds liked it, but they missed a lot of the meaning. The older students I spoke to were disappointed, as was a twenty-one year old friend of mine who said, “I didn’t like it, they did the bell all wrong.”

I spoke to seven of my students after the whole school went to see *Polar Express*. I knew I would be researching the topic of children’s books being made into films and I wanted to get their initial reaction while the film was fresh in their minds. I asked a few

questions of seven boys, expecting that one or two might answer me and I would casually record their responses. I couldn't write fast enough to keep up with their candid answers that came in a flood of enthusiasm and strong opinions. For the most part, they felt disappointed. They seemed to agree that the characters in the film were "strange looking."

Another film reviewer agreed and remarked that, "the motion capture techniques resulted in freakishly animatronics looking characters." One of the more astute observations was from a twelve year old that said, "The North Pole was made to look like a city; it was all wrong." All the boys agreed that the setting was wrong, and it angered them that the film deviated so far from what they've been told all their lives about Santa Claus and the North Pole. Another boy said, "The North Pole doesn't have buildings and lights like that, the North Pole is snowy and quiet and there's a little house where Santa and his elves work." All of them were bothered about the fact that a helicopter was brought in to help Santa load his overstuffed sack onto his sleigh. Someone said, "Santa's bag is normal size, but it can hold all the toys in the world-it's magic." The way the film was made, it looked like the military was called in to help Santa do his job. Whoever thought of that doesn't know children, and worse, they were not being true to the integrity and the magic of the book. Children's author, Eleanor Cameron, says that to write for children you must be a child, therefore it would follow that to make movies for a child, you need to be able to be a child, or at least be able to see like one. Children are so quick, they'll catch any and every deletion, addition, and subtraction. They know when something is authentic and when it's a grown-up's



interpretation. There is a difference.

The students were also upset by the multitude of ugly elves. Again, the thousands of uniformed elves looked more like a scene from Nazi Germany than from Santa's North Pole.

Not only was it offensive and dark, but there were several sophisticated insinuations that were not meant for children to understand. A second grade teacher spoke to her class after seeing the movie and she said that when she asked the class about the "poor" boy who got on the train, the kids had no idea what she was talking about. They don't know what it means to "live on the other side of town." They didn't understand that the last boy to board the train was from a poor neighborhood across the tracks. Children at five, six, and even seven are still taking what they see and hear very literally. Nuances of cultural insinuations and stereotypes are lost on a first grader. None of the children had a clue, nor did I, as to why there was a dirty, old hobo hanging out on top of the speeding train. That character was bizarre and had nothing to do with the magic of Christmas. A film critic, Danusha Goska, refers to this character saying, "There are scenes of perilous efforts to walk atop a moving train during a snow storm, and scenes of children trying to cross a dangerous bridge." I think there's a difference in exciting scenes and stressful, anxiety-causing scenes. *The Polar Express* was full of the latter. A critic at the website [hollywoodreporter.com](http://hollywoodreporter.com) describes the film as "a runaway thriller." How did a nostalgic Christmas story become a thriller? Hollywood-of course!

My opinion of the film is that it was like a multi-layered sandwich: it began with the opening scene and lines from the book, then it added action on the train, then a few

more lines, then more action while building stress, then lines, then wild, terrifying action, more book lines, more terrifying action, lines, stress, lines, stress....all the way to the end. I could imagine the studio executives sitting around saying to each other, "How in the hell are we going to make a 32 page picture book into a full-length film?" Someone answers, "We'll follow the text, but cut it into twelve pieces and fill the spaces in between with wild action scenes every ten minutes. That oughta' make the kids happy." Children do not need violence to be happy. Another issue is that *The Polar Express* as a book was a picture book made for a young child, the movie aimed higher. It was made to appeal to an older kid who they thought would like all the "action." Admittedly, statistics show that teenagers would rather see action scenes like cars being blown up than see famous actors. In 1997, a Fox distribution chief said, "The less dialogue the better. The teens that come to our theaters want car crashes, bombs, a few beautiful bodies, and mind-bending special effects (p. 342)." However, young children are not in the same category, unless they've been fed a constant diet of violence and killing, making them young in years they are old in the ways of violence.

Before I saw the film, the woman who owns Movies 10 Theater told me she thought *Polar Express* was too violent and she didn't know if young children would like it. The film was very different from the book. The book was dark in its pastel illustrations in somber tones of browns and purple and deep blues, but the film was dark in its nature. Ms. Goska refers to *Polar Express* as The first Kiddie-Xmas Film Noir She says *The Wizard of Oz* and other children's classics contain similarly scary scenes, but those

films also offer deep and moving scenes of genuine empowerment and redemption. I missed such redemptive powerful scenes in *Polar Express*.

I agree with Goska. The heart of the book, the part of it that made it a classic, was lost in the crass Hollywoodization of a simple Christmas story. Chris Van Allsberg was even in on it! He should have known better.

I recently went to see the film *Because of Winn-Dixie*, directed by Wayne Wang with 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox. I'm certain the movie lost money. It may have been at our local theater two weeks at the most. I read the Newbery novel before I saw the film because I wanted to see how closely they resembled one another. The screenplay was almost an exact repeat of the text. I thought the book was mediocre, though I have no idea why it won the Newbery. The film was pitiful. It was painfully slow and tedious. Here was an example of a film being true to the book, but to a fault. Ty Burr of the Boston Globe gave the following critique, "In pace, sensibility, and big beating heart, this is a child's first indie film, and it's the better for it." But, Roger Ebert writing for the Chicago Sun-Times said, "It doesn't have a mean bone in its body, but it's dead in the water." I agree.

The film, *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, released December 2004, was taken from Lemony Snicket's books of the same name. I saw the film before I read the books. It may have been true to the story, or just the director's taste, I don't know, but the film was literally dark and ominous. I had very little kid feedback, because it must not have been a well-attended film. One critic from [filmcritiques.com](http://filmcritiques.com) pointed out the questionable subject matter; the wealthy Baudelaire kids lose their parents in a fire so they have to go live with Count Olaf, played by Jim Carey, their nearest relative. Olaf wants to kill the

three children so he can inherit their money. His attempts to have them killed by a speeding train and various other “accidents catches the attention of the executer, and the children are sent to live with a series of eccentric individuals. Olaf kills all the relatives. We find out the only way for Olaf to get the money is to marry the eldest Baudelaier daughter, and then to murder all three children. Really, is this family entertainment?

So, *The Polar Express* was filled with stressful scenes and extra text, and *Because of Winn-Dixie* was painfully ordinary. *Harry Potter* movies were better, but still a far cry from the world the books created. *A Series of Unfortunate Events* was dark and depressing. Are there any kids’ films that we can call excellent? This July, Johnny Depp will star in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, a film made from the beloved Roald classic by the same name. This Warner Bros. production, directed by Tim Burton is already advertising the posters, DVD’s, soundtracks, and other merchandise. It’s sure to be entertaining, and it might even be good.

It may be that studios aren’t really out to create excellent kids’ movies. As it has been said before, the films are teasers, they are the front door into the world of the studio merchandising, they are not an end in and of themselves: they are the bait to catch the fish.

### ***Should Children’s Literature be Made into Films?***

I think it’s a good question to ask. One movie critic says, “ I’m sorry, but things like “The Grinch” just didn’t excite me at all. It’s more the fact that I grew up with the original, there are just some things that should not be made into movies.”

I believe that once a story leaves the realm of the child’s imagination and is frozen in

film, the child loses. What is lost is the child's freedom to imagine, their right to wonder, and all the beautiful pictures in their minds. It's dangerous to tell someone's imagination what to think, what to see, how to feel. That's just what movies do. A child at four, five, or six years old takes life very literally. If you say there's a boogey-man under the bed, the child will look. If you read *Hansel and Gretel* to a three year old, that child's imagination will create a witch in her mind that is safe for her to imagine. Most likely the witch will be an archetypal hag surfacing from the depths of human consciousness, a Jungian persona. The point is that the child will see her own witch, and it will be just right for that child. Now, if you read *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* to a four year old, the child will see a witch that is naturally appropriate for his age. You might say the witch is developmentally appropriate. These witches of the children's imaginations are as they should be. The mind has safeguards against offensive intrusions, against over stimulation, against horrific scenes and grotesque images, against unforgettable images.

When a child watches a movie or a television show, there are no safe-guards. The child is at the mercy of the visual images running in front of their eyes. They could hide their face and not look, but we all know there is something very seductive about film. Walt Disney admitted in an interview in the 1940's that he knew he had a powerful tool in his animated films; a powerful, addictive tool. Children love moving pictures, but that doesn't mean it's something they should do.

A child's mind is active when they read a book or listen to a story being read. They are thinking. A child's mind, or an adult's, is in an alpha state when they watch

television or movies. The alpha state is relaxed and receptive. It is basically a one-way street into a child's mind. That's scary. This aspect of moviemaking wasn't touched upon in Epstein's book, but you can be sure it figures into the advertising and marketing propaganda.

For a strong democracy, this country needs citizens who are able to think. All I have heard for the last 15 years is that students can't, or won't think anymore. Of course that's an exaggeration, but as I work in the public schools, I see this very phenomena in the elementary-age children. They want to be entertained. They do not want to work, and to them work is having to read, write, or think. Their verbal skills are fine, but their minds are lazy. Recently, someone whose husband was just in Los Angeles visiting the film studios, told me that for the past three years, the studios have been hiring young employees who can't think, who won't work. Her husband was told that all these young people are going to lose their jobs because they aren't able to make it.

***Films Need Children, Not the Other Way Around!***

Children need books and not films. In my opinion, there's no good reason for a young child to see a movie. Something like, *The Miracle on Thirty-fourth Street*, could have some social value, but for the most part, children do not need film. They do, however need books and the interaction of reading. The idea that a human's brain was complete and unalterable at birth, though once a scientific certainty, is now passé, old news. Neurobiologists tell us with assurance, offering evidence gathered through magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and other techniques, that early childhood experiences determine physically how the intricate neural circuits of the brain are wired

(Butler, 1989). This is exciting to know that the development and refining of a human nervous system continues for years. This fact allows caring adults to positively affect a child's development and growth; we can make babies smarter.

A child's brain grows most rapidly in the first three to four years of life, and will reach two-thirds to three-fourths of its adult size during this period. Recent research reveals that vital interactions with caregivers literally wire a baby's brain, filling in the broad outlines of her genetic blueprint.

Why books? Why indeed! Children require interactions and stimulation to grow and develop into healthy adults. Communication is critical. Books can play a major role in this process. Butler explains that by their very nature books are language, and language is essential to human communication, and communication is the blood of relationships.

A child sitting with a parent quietly listening to a story read from a book is having some important basic human needs met, needs that cannot be met by technology of any sort. For one, the child is receiving emotional attention and affirmation of their importance and acceptance in the fact that an adult is taking time to sit with them and read. The child's need to share stories and ask questions is being met. Then there are the physiological benefits of the human voice transmitting vast amounts of verbal information, which is stimulating neurological development.

As the intervention specialist, I have seen some horrific cases of childhood neglect where orphans from Romania and Russia were left in cribs till they were four years old, ignored and never held, nor spoken to. One such little Romanian boy remembered being tied in his crib long after he could walk. His adopted American parents are hesitant to see

MRI's of his brain. They know the facts gleaned from scientific investigation into the minds of these children; the MRI's show large gray areas of their brains where there is no activity. Simply put, large areas of the brains never developed from lack of stimulation and human contact. One Russian girl I worked with for four years, remembered laying in a crib of some sort where she had constant ear infections and respiratory infections that were not attended to. The girl was not held, not spoken to, and basically just barely kept alive. The girl came to me because she had an incredibly difficult time getting along in a classroom. She had trouble hearing and she had trouble seeing. We found out she also had an attachment disorder that will probably prevent her from ever having healthy, emotional relationships. She is a bright girl, and with years of therapy she is going to be able to survive her past. All this is to say that children need human attention, and most importantly they need love. In my mind, books are synonymous with the warmth of human attention.

### ***So, Are Movies Bad, Good?***

It's bad enough that our children are targets for international corporate advertising, but to think that we allow Hollywood to shape their minds as well is frightening and irresponsible. I wonder at times if parents have given over the raising of their children to technological nannies, the television and computers. According to Paul Kropp (1996), author of *Raising a Reader*, a growing body of research indicates that a child who watches more than three hours of TV a day will suffer problems in reading, at school, and in social development. A recent report by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Children's Digital Media Centers, based on parent surveys, found that kids in the six



month to six year-old group spent twice as much time watching television as playing outdoors and three times as much time as they spend reading or being read to. The report further showed that children who live in a home where the TV is on all the time, will have trouble learning to read. I see our children being seduced away from literature, reading, and even thinking by the illusive but real power of technology, of which films are a part. Of course films are not intrinsically evil or bad, it's just that they are being used to serve the financial appetites of their creators. Films are here to stay, in whatever new and innovative forms they may appear in the future, they are with us for better or for worse. I think the important issue our society must deal with is to honestly, intelligently assess the multi-faceted effects technology is having upon the development of our youngest citizens.

````There are six global entertainment companies: Time Warner, Viacom, Fox, Sony, NBC Universal, and Disney-that collude and cooperate at different levels to dominate filmed entertainment. It is these six companies that choose the images that constitute a large part of the world's popular culture, and it is these six companies that will continue to shape the imagination of a universe of youth for generations to come.

### ***Rationale for A Study in Mixed-Media Illustration – Literary Collage***

I worked with graphic artist Robert Peppers in order to illustrate a children's picture book I have been working on for three years. The art I am intending to do for my manuscript, *The Hill*, is based on the graphic novel genre. The graphic novel, though some twenty years old, is still the relatively new kid on the block as far as the publishing world is concerned. Within a very short time, this literary youngster has not only

matured, but is quickly entering the mainstream of book production with many of the major book publishers creating a graphic novel niche in their houses. Several editors listed in the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) bi-monthly bulletins advertise they are in the market for graphic novels. It is a hot topic right now.

My interest in the genre is, as I have stated in previous work, to entice young reluctant readers, and kids in general, to pick up books and read. What I have planned for my manuscript is to study the history, geography, geology, ornithology, anthropology, and botany of The Ridges in Athens, Ohio from the beginning of time through the present through the "eyes" of the hill. The format would be similar to a graphic novel in that facts and fun information would be scattered throughout the pages of multi-media college-like illustrations. It would be like a scrapbook of the hill's life.

See Figure 4:1 for Wild Animals; Figure 4:2 Prehistoric Creatures; and 4:3 Orchards.

### *A Literary Collage*

#### *The Graphic Novel Defined*

A graphic novel by any other name is still a graphic novel, because no matter what language the books are printed in, the pictures carry the story, and pictures are a universal language. Although a legitimate genre by its own merit, "graphic novel" is not yet a household phrase. What came to my mind upon first hearing the term was to think of a large comic book. After further study, I see that idea is a gross simplification of a relatively complex literary form.

Author, Keith DeCandido(1990), defines graphic novels as, "a self-contained story that uses a combination of text and art to articulate plot. It is equivalent in content

to a short novel and in some ways a larger version of a comic book(p.64).” Another writer, Michele Gorman, offers this definition, “The graphic novel is an extended comic-style narrative, published in trade paperback, and often showing little kinship with their comic book cousins.” Eliza Dresang, in her book *Radical Change*, says, “The graphic novel resembles the comic book in form and format, with a series of panels containing words and pictures. One might say it is a literary comic book or a hybrid between a text-based novel and a comic book.”

Most graphic novels are a sophisticated balance between picture and word, with both working equally hard to convey the story. Author Aviva Rothchild states the virtues of the graphic novel:

Graphic novels use words and pictures in ways that transcend ordinary art and text, and their creators are more than writers and artists. The artist must have a director’s eye for shadow, angle, setting, and costume. The writer has to know when the text speaks and when the art speaks, avoiding redundancy. In an ideal graphic novel, the text does not distract from the art or vice versa; the eye flows naturally from element to element, creating a whole that a text-only book cannot match.”(65).

It is true that as you turn the pages of a graphic novel, you are almost reminded of the old flip-books where you held a paperback in your hand and flipped through the pages so fast, a miniature movie played out. The reader is an audience as much as a reader. I agree with Rothchild and have thought myself that making a graphic novel is a lot like making story boards for the movie industry. In fact, a friend of mine, a story board artist in Los

Angeles, told me that movie producers prefer to buy the rights to graphic novels because so much of the work is already done for them for the very reason that a graphic novel is formatted like storyboards. My friend is working with two writers who have a story they want to sell in Hollywood. They asked her to first make their story into a graphic novel that they could sell to producers easier than taking their script from company to company.

Comic books and cartoons have always been popular with America's youth, but a  
The Graphic Novel Style Taken a Step Further

The graphic novel format appeals to a young reader that has grown up with the Internet for a playground, and technology as a best friend. These kids are familiar with the nonlinear, multi-layered format of computer screen, Web sites and video games, that presents information in a visual, non-sequential manner.

In her book *Radical Change: Book for Youth in a Digital Ages* Eliza Dresang discusses how graphic novels, comics, and cartoons exemplify the visual, digital world for digital-age young people, who are accustomed to reading the gaps, filling in the blanks, and attending to the visual as well as the verbal. Avi and other young adult authors have moved away from linear systems to a digital age where "bits" of information are nonsequential and rearrangeable, as exemplified by surfing the Internet (Glasgow).

These definitions and perspectives provide an artist, such as myself, with a clear message that my audience is changing; the literary tastes and needs of the child in 2007 is very different than the child of 1990. To move ahead in the world of children's books, whether text books, picture books, or even kids magazines, today's authors and artists have to not only understand the radical changes in children's literature by acknowledging

we are in a technological revolution, but we must embrace the cause and allow our minds to see as kids see.

As I said earlier, I intend to create my manuscript, *The Hill*, as a fun to explore, non-fiction picture book. The basis of the book is a study of the hill, which is The Ridges area of Athens, and follow the hill's "life" from six-hundred million years ago through the ice ages, through Native American occupancy, pioneer deforestation, settler development, and on into the 1900's up till today. The book will study history, geography, geology, botany, zoology, and other topics. I want each page to be filled with colorful drawings, photos, newspaper articles, historic memorabilia, random scientific and environmental facts, pressed flowers or bark from a tree. I think saying it would be like a scrapbook might be the best description. The idea is that I want the book's format to be visually informative and fun. My plan is that the visual-text collage technique will lend a sense of academic credence combined with artistic realism.

*The Hill (Manuscript Draft)*

There once was a Hill.

It wasn't a little hill, and it wasn't a big hill.

It was a soft, rolling foothill of the Appalachian Mountains.

Many animals lived on this Hill.

Hawks, vultures, owls, crows, bluebirds, swallows and more flew and darted in the sky over the Hill.

Deer, bobcat, and fox roamed in silence through the woods around the Hill. Raccoons, rabbits, skunks, groundhogs and squirrels, played in the fields and streams of the Hill.

Small mice, moles, chipmunks and voles stayed safe in the brambles and earthen dens under the Hill.

The tiniest creatures buzzed in the air, scurried in the grass, and crawled in and out of fallen forest trees.

The Hill loved the creatures each and every one.

The Hill wasn't always such a safe and quiet home.

Long long ago, glaciers moved over the Hill and cut and carved valleys and cliffs, ridges and caves.

Giant dangerous creatures lived on the Hill during the glacial periods; bison, woolly mammoth, saber-tooth tigers and mastodon. Prehistoric birds flew overhead.

Over hundreds of thousands of years, the Hill saw many creatures come and go with the changing climate. The Hill watched and was at peace.

Larger birds gave way to smaller birds. The Woolly mammoth and Mastodon died out and white-tailed deer migrated onto the Hill along with bobcat and fox.

Prehistoric humans arrived. These Mound builders worked and lived on the Hill. Bits and pieces from these people's way of life are buried deep inside the Hill. The Hill watched.

Native Americans moved onto the Hill about two thousand years ago. They enjoyed peace on the Hill and shared the abundance of food and water.

About two hundred years ago something changed. French fur-traders and early English pioneers began scouting out the land. These people drove out the Indians and took the Hill for their own. They built a village and were greedy with natural resources. The Hill watched more carefully.

Ancient trees were logged. Entire forests fell. Minerals were mined and animals killed.

Forests became fields.

Now the Hill was disturbed. These people and their guns were noisy. They took and took and took and never gave back. The Hill missed the soft-soled Indians.

A family from the village bought the Hill and farmed it. Orchards of apple and peach trees covered the hillside.

The wild creatures found homes far away in deeper, quieter forests. Domesticated animals lived on the Hill; sheep, goats, cows, cats and dogs.

Time passed, and the Hill was sold. Men with trucks and wagons came to dig and build.

Soon, an enormous brick building was built, a hospital for sick people. Roads were carved into its sides. Trucks and wagons drove on the roads.

The Hill was sad.

In time the Hill grew quieter and the hospital closed. The farmers left and the land was allowed to grow wild. Quiet people walk the earthen paths across the Hill and take nothing, but enjoy the beauty.

The Hill sits, knowing that change will come, that creatures and men come and go. As long as the birds sing in the blue sky and the white-tailed deer raise their young in the green forests, the Hill will smile and be at peace.

***THE END***



Figure 4:1 Wild Animals





Figure 4:2 Prehistoric Creatures



**Figure 4:3 Orchards**

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## **Chapter Five: How Does One Publish Children's Literature**

### ***Publishing Children's Literature: Getting Connected***

The purpose of this research is to provide an overview of the ever-changing scenery of the publishing industry, in particular, the concept of networking. It is possible to acquire knowledge of the world of publishing through books, but even more important than reading about the business, is the networking of individual writers in groups, classes, guilds, lectures, conferences, organizations and other sharing opportunities in which first-hand experience is gained. My intent was to gain an understanding of these avenues of communication, how they work together, and how I could use them to publish my own writing.

### ***A Rationale for Publishing 2007: Getting Connected***

Someone wanting to write and publish picture books in today's intense world of technological advancements in an international market, must not only stand out as a competent author, but as a vigilant observer of culture. Trends and innovations must be noted, and creativity continually applied.

### ***Publishing 2007: Getting Connected***

I wrote my first children's book when I was six, *Freddy the Friendly Skunk* by Vicki Chillik. I was about eighteen when I wrote and illustrated my next book. At twenty-four I spent a year or more collecting Native American literature; poems, legends, and songs I made into a manuscript, *Moon of the Fallen Leaf*. I was impressed with my work. I had used some very old resources and found beautiful stories. The first publisher I contacted to ask permission to use lines from a book they had published, asked me to

send the manuscript to their editors for consideration. I was amazed. I hadn't expected this. I sent my manuscript, and a few months later they asked for more stories. I sent more, and a few months after that they returned my entire collection and told me they had hoped I would have had more authentic sources. I shoved the manuscript under my bed where it stayed for fourteen or fifteen years. I didn't know enough then to see that perhaps this publisher wanted to dialogue with me, or perhaps liked my material but needed me to add contemporary stories from personal contacts among Native Americans. I gave up too easily. What I needed to do was to talk to the publisher, and "get connected."

### ***The Importance of Networking***

Author, Peter Rubie (2002), believes that publishing is first and foremost a business, and that decisions are made not necessarily on how well written a book is, but on how much money it will earn the publishing company. Writing, however artful, is still a business. Rubie's opinion could be a little hard to swallow for creative souls who are new to the world of publishing, but it is true nonetheless. Writing a book is a business endeavor, as all MBA majors know, if you are to succeed in the world of business, you must arm yourself with knowledge of your field and fortify with facts, credentials, and that all important ingredient to success: networking. Authors must do the same.

In a scene of the movie, *Sideways* (2004), the hero of the story, an eighth grade English teacher who has spent three years writing his first novel, calls his agent to find out if his book is going to be published. The agent tells him she's sorry, but his manuscript was turned down. She explains to him that the world of publishing has

become cutthroat and that publishers don't care anymore if someone has a brilliant novel, that, it's all about marketing. Apparently the editors couldn't decide how they would sell his novel. It didn't fit any particular niche.

Editor Jennie Dunham of Dunham Literary, Inc. writes in her book *The Writing Group Book*, that, "It's my job to talk about marketing. In general my job is to talk about a writer's business, and business is marketing, negotiating, and writing checks" (p. 50).

My intent with this exam paper is to write a concise outline of how a new author, such as myself, finds her way from the first moment when she thinks she has a good idea for a book, to how she turns that good idea into a marketable body of work, and finally presents it to an editor, as well as all the networking that must go on in-between. The key words here are "business" and "networking".

In *The Writer's Handbook*, Michael P. Gaffner (2004), offers The Ten Commandments for getting your work published, and the number one commandment is to "Network." By this, Gaffner means that a writer needs to seek out contacts, preferably the power brokers at the top of the masthead or high-level editors, and cultivate them as allies. He says that networking is a must-have tool in your writing existence, because if you ignore this aspect of the business, he warns that you'll suffer the consequences. He also advises writers to write every day, read every day, and to make friends with other writers, and find a mentor.

It's a process I've been somewhat familiar with since I compiled my first book in 1975, a collection of Native American literature entitled *Moon of the Fallen Leaf*. I wrote to a publisher to ask for their permission to use a quote from one of their books.

They granted me permission and asked to see my manuscript as soon as it was completed. I was thrilled. I was also very young. I sent the manuscript. The company kept it for several months and even asked for more material, which I gladly provided. They even sent me a possible publication date. Weeks later, I received not a contract as I had imagined, but my manuscript returned with a note saying that the editor hoped I would have had more direct contact with the Native Americans. I was crushed. I was naive. I shoved *Moon of the Fallen Leaf* under my bed and there it stayed for twenty years.

Knowing what I know now, I would have lived that scenario in a completely different way. Had I known about writers' groups and other sources of advice and support, I might have been able to find someone who would have told me to dialogue with the publisher and find out exactly what they had wanted. Had I known about agents, I might have had professional advice. I could have worked with the editor. I should have asked questions. I could have gotten "connected". "Would'a, could'a, should'a." I have other books I've written over the years tucked away in boxes, perhaps some still under my bed. With the facts and inspiration from this IIP research I have gained the tools I need to breathe new life into my work and to begin a long and persistent systematic campaign of publishing my books, one by one.

### ***Let's Begin: Tools of the Trade***

These days an aspiring author must have a computer; a word processing program with a spell-checker and a good printer as necessities of the trade. Experts warn that hand-writing anything that is to be sent to an editor is a mistake, one that most editors



will not forgive. Not only does a computer offer ease of writing and rewriting, but the Internet is probably the most important writer's tool for gathering information and networking. It provides literally thousands of resources available at your fingertips.

Next on your needs list are some good reference materials. Consider owning: *Webster's Tenth New Collegiate Dictionary*, *Roget's Thesaurus*, *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, an atlas, and possibly a book like *The Writer's Guide to Places* filled with facts about locations and cities all over America. *Careers for Your Characters* is also very helpful, with specifics of more than one hundred occupations along with salaries, benefits, educational requirements, etc.

### ***The Importance of Reading and Writing***

The experts advise new authors to read and write all the time, everyday. Consider reading books about the art of writing and about the people who write. There are great books full of advice from professional authors. An excellent book that provides a thorough study of childhood and writing for children is the *Children's Writer's Reference* by Berthe Amoss and Eric Suben. These authors offer a solid foundation in child development as well as offering advice on ideas, characters, plots and settings. *The Writer's Handbook* is amazing. It is full of valuable information for writers. With advice from "America's most successful writers" the book gives practical techniques of how to develop sellable ideas, create exciting stories, write a children's book, prepare manuscripts for submission, an extensive list of publishers, how to write queries and book proposals, and how to negotiate contracts when things go well. The 2007 edition is the 71<sup>st</sup> edition. At 1051 pages it really is a writer's best friend. I use it all the time.

Author Ursula K. LeGuin (1998), has written a helpful manual for aspiring authors entitled, *Steering the Craft: Exercises and Discussion on Story Writing for the Lone Navigator or The Mutinous Crew*. LeGuin is a prolific author whose work includes novels, stories, poetry, screenplays, chapbooks, as well as numerous editing jobs. Suffice it to say, she knows her craft. In this book she covers topics such as sentence length and complex syntax; adjectives and adverbs; changing point of view; implicit narration; and other basic elements of narrative that are so crucial and yet so painful to learn. LeGuin says, “Once we’re keenly and clearly aware of these elements of our craft, we can use and practice them until-the point of all the practice-we don’t have to think about them consciously at all, because they have become skills. Skill in writing frees you to write what you want to write” (p.34). Reading this book is like having Le Guin personally teaching you. It’s work, but it’s wonderful!

Some other helpful books about writing children’s books are; *Writing for Children and Young People* by Lyn Wynham, *Writing for Children* by Ellen Roberts, *Writing with Pictures* by Uri Shulevitz, *You Can Write Children’s Books* by Tracey E. Dils, *The Green and Burning Tree* by Eleanor Cameron, and *Writing for Young Adults* by Sherry Garland.

There are some very informative books about children’s books such as *The Uses of Enchantment* by Bruno Bettelheim, *Books; Children and Men* by Paul Hazard, *Children’s Books in England* by F.J. Harvery Darton, *The Classic Fairytales* by Iona and Peter Opie, *Three Centuries of Books in Europe* by Bettina Hurlimann, *Children and Literature* by John Warren Stewig, *The Making of Goodnight Moon* by Leonard S.

Marcus, *Creative Storytelling* by Jack Zipes, and *Classics to Read Aloud to Your Children* by William F. Russell.

Some especially noteworthy classics about the art of writing are: *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr., and E.B. White, *The Elements of Grammar* by Margaret D. Shertzer, *The Elements of Editing* by Arthur Plotnik, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, *Only Connect* by Shelia Egoff, and *Telling Writing* by Ken MacRorie,

The next best thing to being able to attend a lecture by a luminary is to read what they have to say. Two web sites with helpful resources are WritersMarket.com and WritersDigest.com. Writer's Digest also has a book club that offers free shipping and serious discounts on informative books for writers.

It is advised to subscribe to some writer's magazines like *Writer's Digest* or *The Writer*. I personally am learning a lot from *The Writer*. I had never read this journal until I started this writing degree, and now as I begin "to connect", and understand the publishing process, I'm finding the articles extremely helpful and filled with current, relevant information. It's also important to read *Publisher's Weekly*, the publishing industry magazine that is read by everyone in publishing, and familiarizing oneself with it will help a writer gain insight into the business of publishing and bookselling. It will keep you up-to-date with publishing news and cutting edge movements in the industry. Remember, publishing is a business, and as in the world of business, what is in today can be out tomorrow. This is true more today than ever before in the history of publishing. It's tempting for a creative individual to stay alone in their library or studio

sequestered from the world, but these days, that would be a luxury for only the wealthy or famous. The rest of us need to stay on our toes as well as we are able.

Another well-respected periodical is the *Writer's Chronicle*, a publication of the Association of Writer's and Writing Programs, which is included in a year's membership to AWP. This magazine provides news, information, and inspiration for writers, and is an open forum for the debate and examination of current issues in contemporary letters and the teaching of creative writing.

A smaller but very interesting publication for writers is the *Crab Orchard Review*, a national literary magazine from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale that features fiction, poetry, and essays as well as offers contests and opportunities for novice writers.

### ***The Importance of Attending Conferences, Writer's Groups, and Workshops***

After you have the materials you need to get started, and you're writing and reading, you will be advised to, get connected, to network. Published authors and editors advise new writers to go to writing conferences to listen, meet, and talk to other like-minded people in the field of publishing. Here you can meet published authors, editors and sometimes agents. It is an opportunity to immerse yourself in the business and to truly experience what it means to network. Some conferences will even offer new authors an opportunity to have their work read and critiqued by professionals. One published author told me that meeting a publisher or editor face to face is worth a hundred letters.

I had no idea there are so many writer's conferences. They are everywhere. It appears that every state in the union has a conference at least once a year. And the conferences aren't just in America, they're all over the world. I'm amazed at the networking opportunities these conferences offer both novice and published writers. And it's not just the authors who attend. It appears as though everybody in the entire publishing industry can benefit. Authors, agents, and publishers meet; publishers display and sell books; writers see which publishing houses might be interested in their books; agents see what the hottest new books are like; and writers can meet with professionals to have their work reviewed. It's all a win-win situation for anyone wanting to get connected.

Dr. Glasgow strongly advised me to attend a conference for some first-hand networking experience. I attended the Central Ohio Writer's of Literature for Children Conference in Columbus, Ohio. It was an author's dream come true; breakout sessions, writing and illustrating workshops and critiques with editors, pitch sessions, professional evaluations, and lectures by authors, agents, editors and sales people. Author Carol Gorman spoke on research and the importance of making your writing authentic. She went into detail about the research she did for her book, *Stumptown Kid*. She had to recreate life in a small Iowa town in 1952. It was fascinating to see the two years of work that went into writing this young adult novel.

Most beneficial to me was a talk by Lisa Cheng, assistant editor with Margaret McElderry Publishing company. Lisa described what it is that she looks for in the first page of a picture book manuscript. She was an honest no-nonsense kind of a gal, very

quick, very bright. She read some manuscripts submitted by conference participants, and critiqued the first pages on the spot. It was great. It was like sitting in her office and watching her work. Lisa's talk gave me new insight into picture book writing, and a clearer sense of what is good and what is superfluous.

An agent, Stephen Fraser, spoke on "Literary Agents 101." He too was honest about the rigors of trying to enter the publishing world, but he said that publishers are always looking for new voices. His lecture confirmed my suspicion that the process of finding an agent is as difficult as finding a publisher.

I attended a talk by Nathan Hemmeigarn, an editor for a large educational publisher in Columbus, School Specialist. His session was called "I Can do That: Freelancing for Educational Publishers." This was an area of writing I knew nothing about. But, after listening to Nathan, I can see that I have expertise in the area of his greatest need: hi-low books for special learners and leveled books that teach the Ohio content standards. I'm also interested in translation work for School Specialist.

Attending this conference allowed me to do my networking and to connect with professionals in the publishing business. I met Judy O'Malley an editor with Charlesbridge Publishers. Judy asked me to send her a copy of my manuscript, *The Red Scarf*, which I did within five days. I took Steven Fraser up on his invitation to send him our manuscripts. Networking is communicating.

Conferences come in all sizes and shapes and address a variety of publishing concerns. In the *Writer's Chronicle*, mentioned above, conferences, seminars and classes are announced and advertised six times a year. In the latest issue, I counted

announcements and application information for five 2007 conferences, seven major seminars and workshops, and advertisements for forty-four writing programs. Ohio University has a half-page spread of the M.A. and Ph.D. Writing Programs in Fiction, Poetry, and Nonfiction. In addition to these ads there are six contests announced and lists of opportunities for receiving writing scholarships and grants. It looks like a writer could spend an entire year just attending seminars and workshops and getting on-line degrees. But then when would she write?

*The 2007 Children's Writers and Illustrators Market*, explains that, whether you're a novice or a seasoned professional, conferences and workshops are a great place to pick up information on a variety of topics and network with experts in the publishing industry.

In addition to that, they tell a novice writer to talk to other writers and get feedback. Though writing is a solitary occupation, it is essential to read your work out loud and to hear it as others hear it, to share your work and receive praise and critique. Are others hearing your story the way you intend it to be heard? Are you in love with a character that others find boring? It helps also to hear other writers' work and to learn how your work is similar or different. Writer's groups serve just this purpose. Rubie (2004), feels that writer's groups are about reaffirming one's creativity, getting reassurance and feedback on your work, and developing confidence and individuality when it comes to putting down words on paper.

*The Writing Group Book* offers advice on how to organize and maintain a successful writer's group. These authors claim that a writer's group is the best source of

inspiration, feedback, motivation, and support for every writer. Group members, poets, playwrights, fiction and nonfiction writers, children's writers and more, offer advice on how to create and maintain a healthy, productive writing group. *Writing Together* by Dawn Denham Hines focuses on the beneficial aspects of writers' groups; stimulation of a creative environment, structure that builds discipline, support to maintain a writing life, and the opportunity to share the creative journey.

I am perhaps more reclusive with my writing, and for this reason I found the words of Ursula LeGuin quite comforting. Concerning writing groups, she believes that at their best, they offer mutual encouragement, amicable competition, stimulating discussion, practice in criticism, and support in difficulty. But if for any reason you can't, or don't feel like joining a group not to feel bad, because ultimately you write alone. I agree with Ursula. I could never write with another person even in the same room with me. For that matter, I can't read with people around. My cat is allowed, but I need absolute peace and quiet. I am, perhaps, too easily distracted. But, I think it is really a much deeper reason than that. When I write, I need uninterrupted access to my mind, to my imagination. And when I go there, I don't want to be called away, especially when writing fantasy. Eleanor Cameron (1969), in her book *The Green and Burning Tree*, explains that there is something inexplicable in fantasy that must be allowed to distill in the mind of the writer like nectar, that can only be felt into being.

### ***The Importance of Joining Writer's Organizations, Guilds, and Unions***

If a writer for children wants to join just one organization, it should be the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, SCBWI. They state their main purpose is to



assist writers and illustrators working or interested in the field. Besides their Annual Conference on Writing and Illustrating held twice a year, they hold one hundred events (workshops/conferences) worldwide each year. In addition to the conferences and workshops, SCBWI provides its members with information about the children's book market by publishing newsletters, brochures, articles, and guides on a wide range of topics. One successful agent was interviewed and asked what she looks for in a potential new author to publish, she answered that she wants to see the person is serious about their work and that they belong to a professional organization like SCBWI. Obviously, it's an important step in becoming a published author. I joined SCBWI two years ago. A published author friend of mine told me that, "You really need to join this organization because it will introduce you to the professional world of writing and publishing." The first year's membership cost seventy-five dollars. To begin with they sent me several brochures and information about members services and priveledges; the SCBWI Bulletin, Award & Grants Programs, an extensive list of Publishers of Children's Books For Young Writers, a Publication Guide to Writing & Illustrating For Children, an enormous state-by-state Membership Roster, and last by not least my membership card. These materials are great resources and doorways to getting connected.

Another organization is The Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) mentioned earlier for its publication, *The Writer's Chronicle*. AWP is a nonprofit literary and educational organization. Its mission "is to foster literary talent and achievement, to advance the art of writing as essential to a good education, and to serve the makers,

teachers, students, and readers of contemporary writing.” AWP serves 24,000 writers, 380 college and university creative writing programs, and 60 writer’s conferences and centers. To this end, they publish numerous lists and advertisements for hundreds of national and international writing programs, workshops, seminars, writing contests, and grants, and even offers career services. They may be contacted at [www. awp@gmu.edu](http://www.awp@gmu.edu).

Some conferences are annual occasions while others are one-of-a-kind. The aforementioned SCBWI holds national and regional events throughout the year. Last year the AWP held a major literary Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia on March 30-April 2. It was the first international AWP Conference and Book Fair with over 200 events from which to choose: keynote address by Alistair MacLeod and readings by famous authors; plus panels, workshops, and roundtables featuring writers, teachers, students, and scholars from hundreds of schools, universities, presses, and publishers. Writers can find listings of more than 1,200 conferences (searchable by type, location, and date) at The Writer’s Digest/Shaw Guides Directory to Writer’s Conferences, Seminars, and Workshops-[www.writersdigest.com/conferences](http://www.writersdigest.com/conferences).

There are many organizations that can help an author become more professional. One of the most well known is the American Society of Journalist and Authors, Internet: [site.asja.org](http://site.asja.org). The ASJA is the nation’s leading organization of independent nonfiction writers. The membership consists of more than one thousand freelance writers of magazine articles, trade books, and other forms of nonfiction writing.

The Author’s Guild is the nation’s largest society of published authors. It is a leading advocate for fair compensation, free speech and copyright protection. It can be

found on the web at: [author'sguild.com](http://author'sguild.com). The National Writer's Union is a similar organization in that they work to protect the rights of writers. It is the trade union for freelance writers of all genre who work for American publishers or employees.

### ***The Importance of Taking Writing Classes and Networking?***

Writing classes are everywhere. They appear to be almost as numerous as the plethora of writer's workshops and seminars. Classes are to be found in every state and throughout the world. There are classes in colleges and universities, through writers' organizations and guilds, through private institutions and even online. A good web site for university and college classes, seminars, and organizations is from the Associated Writing programs, AWP, mentioned previously, Spalding University in Louisville, Kentucky is one of many schools that offers Masters of Fine Arts in Writing and is ideally suited to the writing life, and has only a brief residency. This program and many like it advertises that students are able to write in their own homes, and have access to professionals in their chosen area of interest; be it fiction, non-fiction, poetry, screenwriting, playwriting, or writing for children.

Colleges and universities offer writing programs at undergraduate and graduate levels; some programs are seminars for days or weeks, and others are two and three year courses. Virginia Tech, Georgia College and State University, University of Idaho, Indiana University-Bloomington, Antioch University in L.A., Florida State University, Western Michigan University, Arizona State University, Louisiana State University, Ohio University, Bowling Green State University, and a multitude of others offer degrees in Creative Writing. The University of Mississippi even has a \$60,000 Grisham Scholarship to tempt new students.

Besides college campuses that offer degrees in writing, there are centers that exist for the sole purpose of serving writers. The following are a few: The Center for Writers in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, The Stadler Center for Poetry, and The James A. Michener Center for Writers.

For those who are interested in learning online, there are several choices for e-classes in writing. The University of Phoenix Online offers courses in Written Communication (COMM 101), Business Writing Essentials (COMM 208), Essentials of College Writing (COMM 215), Proposal Writing (COMM 301), and Creative Writing (COMM 340). University of Phoenix advertises that, their online courses allow you to design your own class schedule, study from the comfort of your home, and provide you with a curriculum that meets high academic standards.

Gotham Writer's Workshop, GWW, claims to have grown to become the leading creative writing society in New York City and online. WritingClasses.com is the online division of GWW. I haven't spoken to anyone who has taken an online course from them, but the curriculum outline is tempting. I suppose one would have to take one of their classes to know if it was worth the time and money or not. Here are a few of the writing classes: Travel Writing, Memoir Writing I and II, Mystery Writing, Science Fiction writing I and II, Poetry Writing I and II, Romance Writing I and II, TV Sitcom Writing, Children's Book Writing I and II, and Screenwriting I and II. I checked into the Children's Book Writing classes because this is my area of interest. The write-up is tasty, and makes this promise; In our courses, you will discover how to balance youthful imagination with adult professionalism, gain awareness of the various forms and age-ranges, and learn such craft elements as character, plot, point of view, description,

dialogue, setting, voice, and theme. You will also learn how and where to market your work. All this is available on-line for tuition of \$395 plus a registration fee of \$25. Your money buys you a ten week online workshop that utilizes professional writers and interactive critiques.

Writer's Digest advertises their on-line writing classes as personalized instruction. With the WritersOnlineWorkshops.com you work one-on-one with a published, professional author and get detailed feedback on every assignment, plus you exchange ideas and inspiration with other workshop participants. Other online writing classes are offered by; Education Direct, Stratford Career Institute, and the Professional Career Development Institute.

***So You Have an Idea for a Story!***

So, you have an idea for a story? According to Peter Rubie (2004), writing at a publishable level is a craft, just like carpentry, and just like carpentry, it can be learned. Just put in the right effort, listen to those who know what they're talking about, stay the course, and eventually you'll achieve your goal. What this statement means is that with discipline and savvy networking, you too can turn an idea into a book. Of course, he wanted all the wanna-be, unpublished authors to be encouraged and buy his book. However, for as many times as I have heard that perseverance and determination will bring success, I have heard the contrary, that it is very difficult to break into today's world of publishing. I'm choosing to be positive and believe anything is possible.

Once you have a good idea you need to network more than ever. The next step appears to be to do some market research. You need to define your audience, know who they are, size up the competition, talk to booksellers and librarians, go to bookstores and see what books like your idea are published and find out who is publishing them.

Rubie (2004), in his book, *The Everything Get Published Book*, tells how to prepare both fiction and nonfiction book proposals, how to write a query letter, and offers a sample book proposal. He explains that if someone presents a great book proposal, as opposed to a mediocre one, they are way ahead of the game. In his words, “Your proposal had better stand out, and it had better be well prepared and professionally presented. If it isn’t, I guarantee the next guy’s will be. Editors are looking for decent ideas, professionally presented, by a writer who looks like he or she can deliver what he or she promised” (p.178).

Next, an author must decide to go with an agent or not. It seems to me that twenty years ago, agents were for a select few, the privileged writers. Now, with the “cut-throat” publishing industry, many professionals advise getting an agent. If you are fortunate enough to find an agent to represent you, they will do much of the networking for you, they are professionals at it. However, Robin Hampton an assistant editor for *Writer’s Digest*, warns that you should not expect an agent or publisher to take care of details like marketing and promotion. She advises to do most of the promotion for your book yourself and then you won’t be disappointed.

The point is that agents are savvy movers in the publishing world. They know what publishing houses want. They are paid basically for being matchmakers; matching

your work to a publisher. In business terms they are the middleman. They are only going to take your work if they think they too can monetarily benefit from the sale of your manuscript. Although agents are about money, they are also looking for writers with whom they can have long and fruitful relationships. They don't want to represent an author who happened to produce one great book and then fizzled out. The author/agent relationship appears to be perhaps the most important piece of networking as agents are professionals at selling your work.

The March 2005 issue of *Writer* has an article in which sixty agents were surveyed in an attempt to, "learn the outlook for rookies trying to crack into the brutally competitive publishing industry." They asked the agents questions like, What is the most critical mistake writers make when approaching literary agents for representation, where do agents find clients, and what is the most common reason an agent declines to represent a writer. Many agents complained of authors being uneducated about the publishing process. The author needs to know who will buy his book. The author needs to think of himself as a small businessperson entering a new industry, not as a literary artist. Agents advise new authors to polish their pitch and use every chance to meet people in the industry.

Regardless of whether you choose to work with an agent or represent yourself, Any author must do his or her homework and know how to enter the publishing world on a professional foot. The industry moves fast, changes happen overnight. An author has to know what's going on. In today's publishing world it is not enough to write well, in order to enter the publishing arena, there are hurdles to jump and ropes to climb.

Some helpful books that address the issue of the steps and networking involved in Publishing: Peter Rubie's *The Everything Get Published Book*, *The Writer's Handbook*, *Writer's Market FAQs*, and *Children's Writer's & Illustrator's Market*. These books will lead you through the publishing maze. *The Writer's Internet Handbook* gives information on how to successfully use the Internet to network and communicate with the publishing world. The author acknowledges that a writer must always follow the guidelines of any company they are contacting. Maloy includes a section titled, Networking Through the Net and writes about Netiquette. Maloy feels there are still circumstances that will require you to send hard-copy versions of your writing on speculation to editors-but now a great majority of your written liaisons with editors can be conducted via the Net.

Again, this advice is from a writer who has her own interest in mind, and wants to push the idea that paper copies are old-fashioned. I decided to check several of the 4,000 publishers listed in the *2007 Children's Writer's and Illustrator's Market*. I wanted to see if they are accepting e-mail submissions, and to see if they have a preference in accepting agented vs. unagented work. I figured while I was at it, I'd also note what publishers accept a larger percentage of work from first-time authors. These three issues are especially important to me as a first-time author, unagented, and as someone who prefers paper copies, but would be glad to send e-mails if required to do so. Overall, it appears that the larger, well-established, publishing houses want to work with authors through an agent, they generally accept a small percentage or none at all of first-time authors, and



they prefer hard-copies. Some of these larger publishers aren't even accepting manuscripts at all.

In order to contact either an agent or an editor, usually one must construct a cover letter to accompany the manuscript following the publisher's submission guidelines.

See Figure 5:1 for Cover letter to Karen Klockner, Transatlantic Literary Agency and Figure 5:2 Cover Letter to Summer Lori, Ten Speed Press.

**Figure 5:1 Letter to Karen Klockner, Transatlantic Literary Agency**

4/6/05

Dear Karen Klockner,

I am the author/artist that Erica Magnus mentioned to you in January. I appreciate your response to her, and your willingness to see my work. Enclosed you will find six pages from my book, *Absolutely Beastly Creatures*. The page designs and pictures represent how I visualized the text as I was writing it. They are in no way meant to be a dummy. The inspiration for this book came from my desire to create reading material for my students with learning disabilities. I have drawn deeply upon my own creativity and imagination to engage and entertain my rowdy crew of boys seven to twelve years old who have reading levels two to four years below their ages. Blood, guts and monsters have proven to be motivational and fun for these reluctant readers.

All my life I have been either working on book ideas in my mind, or actually writing a story, and often doing both at the same time. My love of children, art and writing has spanned a lifetime. I have acquired two Master's degrees; one in art education and the other in special education. I am now a Ph.D. student working on a degree in children's literature. Through the years I have written books, though none are published. I have, however, published a magazine article and a year's worth of monthly articles for an educational periodical. Last year I wrote and directed an Irish Dance Performance entitled, *The Wedding*, based on four years of Irish research for an ancient Irish fairy tale I am writing. I'm also working on an early chapter book for eight to nine year olds, as well as developing my photography and writing skills. Now that both of my daughters are in college I have more time to devote to my writing life. I spent today as a judge on a panel for a Reading Rainbow Young Writers and Illustrators contest. It was a joy.

My contact information:

Vicki Carter  
78 Franklin Avenue  
Athens, Ohio 45701

740-592-2293 - Home  
740-593-6901 - Work  
vic\_carter@hotmail.com

I look forward to your reply

Sincerely,

Vicki Carter

**Figure 5:2 Cover Letter to Summer Lori, Ten Speed Press**

June 15, 2005

Summer Lori, Senior Editor  
Ten Speed Press  
P.O. Box 7123  
Berkeley, CA 94707

Dear Summer Lori,

Last January, Ron Docie, an author with Ten Speed Press, told you about my manuscript, *Absolutely Beastly Creatures: An A to Z Collection of Terrifying Creatures*, and asked if you would be interested in seeing it. He said you responded, "It sounds like fun, have her send it."

Enclosed are the first eighteen pages of the manuscript. Although some pages are illustrated, I am not an illustrator, and the artwork simply reflects how I imagined the text. It is not meant to be a dummy.

As an intervention specialist in the public schools I found that I was able to engage my seven to eleven year-old reluctant readers by drawing upon their interest in monsters and terrifying beasts. Their reading abilities prevent them from being able to read novels or more exciting reference materials their peers enjoy.

I am currently working on a Ph.D. in children's literature, and have two other children's books in process. I have taught special education for ten years and have Master's degrees in art and in education.

Thank you very much for your interest in my manuscript. It is a simultaneous submission. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Vicki Carter

*Enclosures:*

Cover Letter  
Manuscript (sample pages)  
SASE  
SAS confirmation postcard

78 Franklin Avenue  
Athens, Ohio 45701  
740-592-2293  
vic\_carter@hotmail.com

A few companies, roughly 5 percent of those I surveyed, will absolutely not accept e-mail: Simon & Schuster, Birdsong, Blue Marlin Publishers, Chronicle Books, Dial Books, Just Us Books, are a few. An even smaller percent of publishers state that they actually prefer submissions by e-mail. The majority of publishers appear to prefer initial contact through a query letter or e-mail query, and then want paper mss if they are interested. As to the issue of agented vs unagented, a few larger companies will only work through an agent, and one smaller press, Action Publishing, said they want only agented work. With the majority of publishers, it doesn't appear to be a major issue. However, the screenwriting market is the opposite, and e-submissions are the norm.

As to whether or not a publisher will accept first-time authors, companies vary from absolute refusal to see first time authors, or accepting very little like Blue Sky Press that accepts only 1%, to Tricycle Press that accepts 25% from new authors, to All About Kids Publishing that accepts 80% from new authors. The *2007 Children's Writer's and Illustrator's Market* encourages authors to do their homework before submitting work. They advise, that if a publisher interests you, send a SASE for submission guidelines before submitting. Check publisher's websites, as many include their complete catalogs. Once you've done your homework and decided to work through an agent or not, it's time to get your work out there!

### ***Making My Own Connections***

As a result of this research I have discovered invaluable new information concerning the world of publishing. My exposure to university and continuing education

classes has kept me somewhat informed, but if there is one thing that has not changed about publishing in the thirty years I have been studying it, it is that the publishing industry is always changing. And for that reason, in order for a writer to keep abreast of the market and maintain a professional career, constant research and networking must be a priority second only to their writing.

I am gleaning great insight and professional etiquette from writer's books and journals. I also gathered current market information from talking to librarians in elementary schools and in Alden Library, as well as in our local public library. Concerning my ABC Monster book, I asked one librarian what books boys ask for most often. She told me that boys ask for monsters, dinosaurs, and non-fiction books. What a great piece of information to add to a sales pitch for my manuscript. I did further market research and found that Barnes and Noble has no current book for the juvenile market on the topic of monsters or beasts in a format similar to mine. This is great to know. A little historical Internet search found that very few books like mine have ever been published. Of course, I know this could mean no publisher would ever want a book like mine, but it can also mean that the time is ripe to fill this niche in the marketplace. Again, I'm going to think positive and send it out.

I made an effort to meet with and talk to published authors. One author is currently putting out a new book, and the other author has been out of the publishing game for two years. Both authors were incredibly helpful, full of pertinent advice, and more than willing to critique my work.

I attended a regional literary conference on February 26, sponsored by the Ohio

Council of the IRA Appalachian Reading Council. The day was invigorating. The guest speakers were Bonnie Pryor and Janet Hickman, both children's books authors. It was important for me to see that both authors never gave up their "day-jobs" for writing: Bonnie owns a bookstore and Janet is a professor of children's literature at Ohio State University. I have heard many authors say that writing children's books is not profitable. Bonnie's talk was written for me! She went right into a discussion of the publishing world today and how it has changed in the past twenty years. What she had to say was so exciting because it backed up everything I had found in my research. Overall, she painted a pretty depressing picture for a new author wanting to get published these days. She said that when she published her first book in 1988 there were maybe fifty publishing houses. Now, she said, there are five major players and three of those are foreign-owned. She reiterated the fact that these big guys are out to make money and that's that. In children's books, she said they are looking for TV characters and shows, one-liner books of jokes, comics, and non-fiction. Someone advised her that these conglomerates don't even want stories anymore.

She confirmed a fact I had read, that as a reaction to these five huge publishers and how they do business, several smaller presses have been created, though many of them are regional publishers with restricted interests. A bright spot was hearing that first-time authors do seem to be getting published, but it's harder to get a second and third book accepted. She said that if your book doesn't sell really well in the first six months, it's gone, and whatever copies are left are sold to a business like half-price books.com. She warned us that if you ever see a children's book you like, you better buy it because it

probably won't be around very long.

An interesting fact I had not heard was that at Barnes and Nobles or Borders book stores, the books prominently displayed at the ends of the aisles have been put there because one of the mega publishers has paid a lot of money to have their newest books in that spot. She told us Barnes and Nobles executives are going into publisher's meeting and making decisions about covers and even what will be published. In my mind, this is more than a little scary. It's a politically charged issue that is indicative of what is happening on an international level as far as a few owning and controlling the majority of any market including utilities and even food supplies.

I am now more fearful than before because the publishing industry has become such a formidable giant up against whom I feel so small and inconsequential. But, the good news is that as a result of these Goliath publishing houses that gobble up other companies for breakfast, many new, small presses have been born and are willing to invest in new authors. So, there is hope after all.

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## **Chapter Six: Summary and Implications for Further Study**

The intent of this dissertation has been to present a researched approach to writing and publishing children's literature. This body of work provides an author with a course of action by which she may take a book idea, turn it into a manuscript, and deal with publishing houses in a professional informed manner.

Fundamental to the authoring/publishing process is knowledge of the following: knowing your audience, being aware of cultural issues faced by today's youth, staying abreast of market trends in the entertainment and publishing industry, and always being involved in some form of networking with other professionals.

The writing/publishing process is a journey. This dissertation provides a general roadmap with directions for traveling from point A to point Z. Major avenues are advised, necessary steps are highlighted, but each individual will certainly encounter her own turns, twists, and detours. Broad strokes are laid out for the aspiring author of children's books, but individual writers will find their own path depending upon individual personalities, goals and experience.

Writing has always been and will always be, a noble art. Good children's literature is needed more today than ever before. A child sitting and looking at a television or a computer screen is having a very different experience than a child who is sitting with someone who reads and talks and discusses life with her.

I believe that as our world turns faster and we all run out of time, it will be crucial to the welfare of our democracy for all children to be nurtured to the best of our ability. And, you would think in this vast, immensely wealthy world of ours that no child would

“be left behind.” But, many are needy and many more are illiterate. Millions of dollars spent on testing and new curriculum will never improve our children’s lives. The simple fact is that either a child has or has not been nourished in body and soul by the time he or she enters school. A child either has or has not been read to and introduced to all the wonders of language. My hope is that regardless of where or with whom a child spends her days, that once home, parent and child will have the joy of reading and learning together.