jeux langagiers et l'autonomie souvent téméraire de ses illustrations. Quelques récits sont moins efficaces, moins cohérents que les autres (celui de l'éléphant, par exemple), mais dans l'ensemble cet album se lit bien. Chaque personnage est régi par une constante, celle d'être différent, meilleur et ultimement autre. La giraffe veut être vedette de cinéma dans la plus pure tradition de Michel Tremblay, le rhinocéros aura des lunettes pour mieux voir, l'éléphant désire être vert et se fondre dans le paysage, le singe veut être homme. Pour arriver à ces fins, les personnages animalisés ne passent par aucune autre épreuve que celle de leur expression dans un langage qui est justement celui de l'humanité, aussi cocasse soit-elle.

François Paré *enseigne la langue et la littérature française à l'Université de Guelph en Ontario. Il est rédacteur associé à* CCL.

VIEWS OF CHILDHOOD

Dinner at Auntie Rose's, Janet Munsil. Illus. Scot Ritchie. Annick Press, 1984. Unpaginated $4.95 paper. ISBN 0-920236-63-4; ***Emily's paper route,*** Susan Murgatroyd. Illus. Suzanne Langlois. Annick Press, 1983. Unpaginated $4.95 paper. ISBN 0-920236-51-0; ***It's a good thing,*** Joan Buchanan. Illus. Barbara DiLella. Annick Press, 1984. Unpaginated $4.95 paper. ISBN 0-920236-65-0; ***Waldo's back yard,*** Shirley Day. Illus. author. Annick Press, 1984. Unpaginated $4.95 paper. ISBN 0-920236-73-1; ***Yeah, I'm a little kid,*** Darryl Borden. Illus. Lynn Smith. Annick Press, 1983. Unpaginated $4.95 paper. ISBN 0-920236-76-6; ***Barnaby and Mr. Ling,*** Allen Morgan. Illus. Franklin Hammond. Annick Press, 1984. Unpaginated $4.95 paper. ISBN 0-920236-67-7; ***Captain Carp saves the sea,*** John Larsen. Illus. author. Annick Press, 1983. Unpaginated $4.95 paper. ISBN 0-920236-48-0; ***The upside-down King of Minnikin,*** Fran Handman. Illus. Robin Lewis. Annick Press, 1983. Unpaginated $4.95 paper. ISBN 0-920236-46-4.

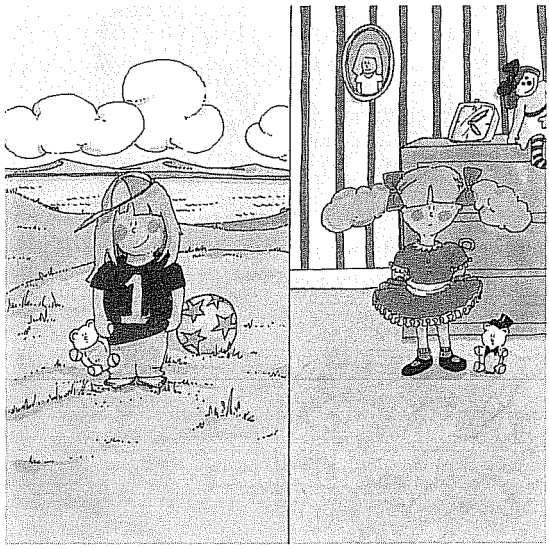
Society's views of children and the real and imaginary worlds of childhood are mirrored and reflected in picture books. Historically, the illustrator has depicted the child as a young adult in the British moralistic, cautionary tales of the late 18th century. Encumbered by formal attire, exuding the good manners taught by overly zealous tutors and nannies, the child appears lifeless in many woodcut illustrations adorning early books for children. From the palette of artist-illustrator Walter Crane, the child takes on an almost Pre-Raphaelite beauty.

Author-illustrator Kate Greenaway's children exhibit a pristine innocence and charming fragility. George Cruikshank's depiction of the child's potential exuberance, still wrapped in adult dress, was to be set free later in the 19th century by the accomplished artist, Randolph Caldecott. No longer was the child's personality to go unheeded by illustrators. Children as individuals had set forth on a path towards self-identification with their interests, needs and personal tales waiting to be told and portrayed fully in illustration and text. Twentieth century authors and illustrators, Carl Larsson, Edward Ardizzone, Robert McCloskey and Maurice Sendak, to name a few, took up the challenge.

An illustrated comic alphabet, the first Canadian picture book, written and illustrated by Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon in 1859, like its British counterparts, depicts the child as a young adult; it opened the door to the publishing of picture books for children in Canada. Illustrators of our century have chosen to delineate the child as an active participant in life. Witness the children in the work of the late William Kurelek whose children speak of to-day in their dress, activities and interests. Although stylized in illustration, Sue Ann Alderson's creation, Bonnie McSmithers of *Bonnie McSmithers, you're driving me dithers,* Tree Frog Press, 1974, personifies the child of our time, proclaiming her individuality in the scheme of relationships. Ginette Anfousse's lovable and playful Jiji, presented in lively, coloured illustrations spilling onto pages of the text, speaks of the young child's active imagination as shown through play with her pet anteater, Pichou.

Recently, Canadian children have been fortunate in having picture books portraying them in their real world and delineating the world of their imagination. Toronto's Annick Press, named 1984 Publisher of the Year by the Canadian Booksellers Association, is in the forefront of these publications.

Lucy, the six-year-old heroine of *Dinner at Auntie Rose's,* is no meek Goody Two Shoes accepting instructions from cautionary tales designed for the admonition of young children. Lucy is a liberated little girl in her thoughts but finds herself thwarted when she must conform to adult behavioral demands when called upon to visit her aunt. The first full page portrait of the little girl shows her unwanted split personality. One half of the page shows her as a barefoot, androgynous tike, her cap atop her straight hair, casually dressed in jersey and pants and clutching her naked teddy. The other half of the page shows a startingly different Lucy ready to visit her aunt (fig. 1). This child, although not adorned in the long high waisted dress of Kate Greenaway's model child, appears as mother's presentable girl with pink dress, white sash, socks and shoes, and tightly curled hair caught up with matching pink bows. Even poor teddy beside her wears a tie and top hat. The seventeen-year-old author of this humorous book (foreign rights are pending in the U.K. and France) is in real touch with the rebellious child as she relates all the social hazards involved with her visit. The artificiality of adult expectations, "stand up straight," "say please and thank you," "don't shuffle your feet," to name a few, are



countered by Lucy's inner reactions. Here is a contemporary look at manners. Many children will associate with Lucy's feelings and her inner dialogue although one questions whether a six-year-old would be quite so discerning and harbour such naughty thoughts as, "Jeremy is my cousin. He is a turkey." or "Uncle George has to be humoured." However, the book's fast pace, humourous illustrations and satisfying ending will appeal to some young readers.

The young heroine of *Emily's paper route* is a liberated girl. Older and more mature than Lucy, she has been blessed with parents who do not force their expectations on her but encourage her independence and sense of responsibility. Casually dressed, her long red pigtails hanging over her shoulders, she sets out cheerfully every morning on her paper route. Using her earned money she purchases a puppy and lovingly teaches it to retrieve sticks. This play backfires on her when the puppy applies his new skill to Emily's papers. Young children on the road to independence will enjoy the simple plot, the heroine's spirit, and the refreshing statement on family life and society's regard for female liberation. The lighthearted watercolours on each page extend the text and succeed in capturing the child's happy disposition coupled with her maturing sense of responsibility (fig. 2). This book will appeal to teachers, parents and especially children looking for positive role models for girls.

The relationship between two siblings is the theme of *It's a good thing.* The action of the slight story arises from events which take place when the older sister Marie takes her little sister Elizabeth for a walk. Although conscious of her caring and leadership role, Marie daydreams. As a result, the younger sister must save Marie from injury. The young child's actions ironically bring

out the older sister's's sense of reality and responsibility. Rooted in the traditional theme of the youngest child's prowess, this story falls just short of being confusing and uninteresting. The potential for a good, realistic story relating to a child's inner needs is there but not realized. Unfortunately, the text is confusing and the change of typeset size only creates visual confusion. Although pretty, the illustrations of the girls in turn of the century dress add nothing to the tale's effect or the girls' characterization. In fact, one wishes the artist had presented real, down-to-earth children with whom young readers could identify.

Mr. Tester, the querulous neighbour first introduced in Shirley Day's *Ruthie's big tree,* Annick Press, 1982, is back again. This time he finds himself once more in conflict with children next door. Young Waldo's backyard is a child's paradise, complete with rubber tire swing, lion's pit and tree house. However, to cranky Mr. Tester it's an eyesore. Conflict between the young and the old mounts until a near tragedy brings about reconciliation and change of character. Of all the stories listed above, this has the best plot line with elements of conflict, suspense and a fitting denouement. The two children, Waldo and Elizabeth, interact with Mr. Tester and with each other in natural dialogue. The girl is the heroine here and her actions bring about a most satisfying ending in which the child is brought out in the adult.

Unlike the heroine of *Dinner at Aunt Rose's* who expresses negative and rather nasty attitudes towards adults, free from the artificiality of the two sisters in *It's a good thing,* and closer in spirit to Emily and the stars of *Waldo's back yard,* the "little kid" in *Yeah, I'm a little kid* speaks on behalf of all free

spirited children. The young child-narrator considers the pros and cons of growing up and finally happily realizes the advantages of being young. After all, kids can have more fun "making a house out of a box," "going down the slide backwards," "having a great snowball fight" or "just making a mess." This book truly celebrates childhood. The outstanding coloured collage illustrations by Lynn Smith, award-winning animator with the National Film Board of Canada, capture the character's conscious and subconscious thoughts and give added vibrancy to the fast-moving text. The artist creates the atmosphere of busy inner city street scenes and active play yards while expressing the happy mood of this non-sexist, multi-racial picture book (fig. 3).

Children have travelled a great distance from their staid Victorian and Edwardian background to the world of willful thinking, admission of naughty attitudes towards adults, liberation, control over one's life and the freedom to be happy in being "a little kid."

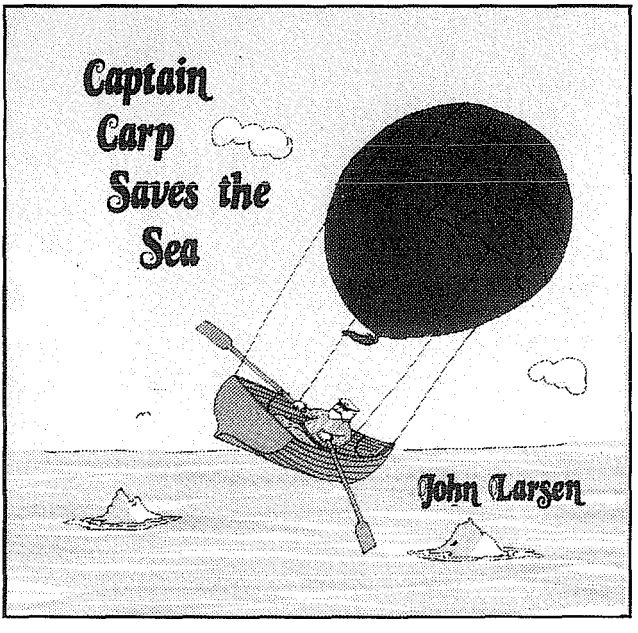
The last three titles listed above are fantasies not featuring children. The first two stories are rooted in the real world. The last story creates a new and fanciful world for young readers.

Barnaby and Mr. Ling is written by the author of the easy to read *Christopher and the elevator closet* and *Molly and Mr. Maloney,* both from Kids Can Press, 1981. The story's opening pages are grounded in reality but soon take on a dreamlike quality. Barnaby, a sad circus elephant, and Mr. Ling, a peanut vendor, wish to escape from their unhappy world into dream fulfillment. The elephant dreams of collecting stories to tell his friends back in their natural

habitat, the vendor of buying and flying his own airplane "filled with things everybody needs." As friends they escape to a nearby park where they indulge in their dreams. In conclusion the author invites his readers to share the fantasy with the words: "And late at night when you're lying in bed, you might just try to think of them lying in their beds too. Because if you do you can dream their dreams along with them."

This is an unfortunate unravelling of the story. Young readers not given clearly defined lines between the real and the fanciful will become confused at this invitation, only wishing for more action in seeing the dream materialize. The watercolour illustrations, although individually attractive, fail to help the story or the reader to accept the fantasy.

Captain Carp saves the sea, written and illustrated by a native of Prince George, B.C., is winner of the 1984 Alcuin Society Book Design Award and is currently awaiting publication in Japan. Everything is real for Captain Carp who loves to row his boat in the afternoon and relax at home in his lighthouse after dinner. Real, that is, until: "He looked to the north and he looked to the east but he couldn't see a trace of his beloved sea." What follows is a wonderful search for the sea by the captain. Young children will love his adventure and final meeting with a gigantic purple sea monster. The story's suspense, climax, satisfying conclusion and final return to reality are captured in simple, clear, coloured illustrations. Especially memorable is the monster in double page spread, gaping (fig. 4) jaws revealing the ocean itself.



Far from the real world is the setting for *The upside-down King of Minnikin.* Here the foolish king always answers his own questions with both unfortunate and hilarious results. The climax comes when he decrees that his subjects must walk on their hands. "You can imagine what it was like. The Kingdom of Minnikin was really turned upside-down." Capturing the humour of ensuing events are illustrations by Robin Baird Lewis who illustrated *Red is best* and *Big or little?,* both from Annick Press, 1983. Her framed watercolours are detailed and lighthearted in mood showing the townsfolk going about daily life, on their hands (fig. 5). Young children and some older children will enjoy the slapstick comedy of this book, very suitable for reading aloud.

Picture books successfully displaying children as natural participants in real situations and creating believable fantasies are welcome additions to the world of children's literature.

Joan Weller *has taught children's literature at several Canadian universities. Past President of IBBY — Canadian Section and a member of the Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Award Committee, she is currently a children's librarian with the Ottawa Public Library.*