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February 21, 1966



As the new book list below demonstrates, we are still in the process of acquiring the Edward Gorey books. For some of them he cannot be held entirely responsible. He is merely illustrator. But what is the relationship of the artist (illustrator) to the work illustrated? Are first-rate illustrations possible in a third-rate book? I don't mean pictures chosen by an editor and added to a book; I mean illustrations growing out of an artist's response to a book. This qualification assumes, however, that there is a relationship--artistic? organic? emotional?--between illustrator and book. Any cursory survey of the field suggests that the usual relationship is the "cash nexus" that William James so conveniently made respectable. Illustration is a business. You become good (you are good?) and achieve a name. You are asked to do the illustrations for. You are paid a specified amount. But how does one become good at illustration unless through creating graphic representations of such accuracy or felt rightness that significant people recognize and applaud? If appropriateness is not the main criterion for excellence in illustration, then mere technical facility is the goal and learning how to read only necessary to get a driver's license. Norman Rockwell has illustrated widely. I understand he is not first-rate, but that Leonard Baskin is. Whatever Mr. Rockwell's status in the eyes of fellow illustrators, he has seldom chosen to illustrate anything that he does not understand, the which cannot be said of Mr. Baskin who has failed completely to translate Homer's Iliad. It seems to me that no reputable firm would ask Norman Rockwell to illustrate Dostoevsky. But the real issue is, would Mr. Rockwell accept such an assignment? Mr. Joe Cleary's current show in the library has some remarkably fine illustration work (a la Sports Illustrated and Fortune). Well and good, but would we wish to see him illustrate Hemingway or Henry James or Marcel Proust or Thorne Smith? Is it necessary for the artist to read the book or the story before he illustrates it? Obviously not. There is ~~much~~ evidence to show that illustrators may have only the thinnest idea of what they are portraying.

Analogously, for all the beauty of Schubert's Rosamunde music, what has the music to do with the play? Mendelssohn's Midsummer Night's Dream music is so completely at one with the play one is almost tempted to suggest that the music could not have existed without the play. Mr. Gorey's Gashleycrumb Tinies suggests that the illustrations came first and the text last since in those cases where the text was first (Monster Festival and the Haunted Looking Glass) the illustrations range from adequate to totally inept.

NEW BOOKS

- 131
.3464 Jung, Carl G. Psyche and symbol. New York, 1958
J85ps
- 136.41
R34 Radin, Paul. Primitive man as philosopher. New York, 1957
1957
- 201
J37 Jaspers, Karl. Myth and Christianity; an inquiry into the possibility of religion without myth. New York, 1958
- 371
.335 Suttles, Patricia. Elementary teachers guide to free curriculum materials.
E38c Randolph, Wisc., 1965.
Ref.
- 615.32
P49H89 Huxley, Aldous. Heaven and hell. New York, 1956.
H4 (Mr. Huxley's attempt to rationalize the use of LSD and associated drugs now officially represented in the psychedelic papers.)
- 701
115016 Kiell, Norman. Psychiatry and psychology in the visual arts and aesthetics: a bibliography. Madison, Wis., 1965.
K53
Ref.
- 709.5
S42 Seckel, Dietrich, The Art of Buddhism. New York, 1964.
- 729.72
J37R6 Yabashi, Rokuro. Yabashi marble mosaics. Tokyo, 1965. (Contemporary Japanese mosaic work on walls, pavements, homes, industrial buildings)
- 739
.512 Sivaramamurti, C. South Indian bronzes. New York, 1963.
15S57
- 808.83
G67 Gorey, Edward. The Haunted looking glass. New York, 1959.
- 809.91
L6907 Ortega y Gasset. On love; aspects of a single theme. New York, 1957. (Odd to think a Spaniard in the 20th century could produce this work)
- 811
C52K5 Ciardi, J. The king who saved himself from being saved. Philadelphia, 1965.
(Author and artist are compatible here)
- 811
G67R4 Gorey, Edward. The remembered visit. New York, 1965.

NEW BOOKS.....cont 'd

813.08

P967 Trotter, Eric. Monster festival. New York, 1965. (A collection of horrors, illus. by Gorey)

817

G67W8 Gorey, Edward. The Wuggly Ump. Philadelphia, 1963.

817

L35 Lamport, Felicia. Scrap irony. Boston, 1961. (Society verse with illus. by Gorey)

901.94

T45 Teller, Edward. The Reluctant revolutionary. Columbia, Mo., 1964. (Should be read with half an eye on Oppenheimer)