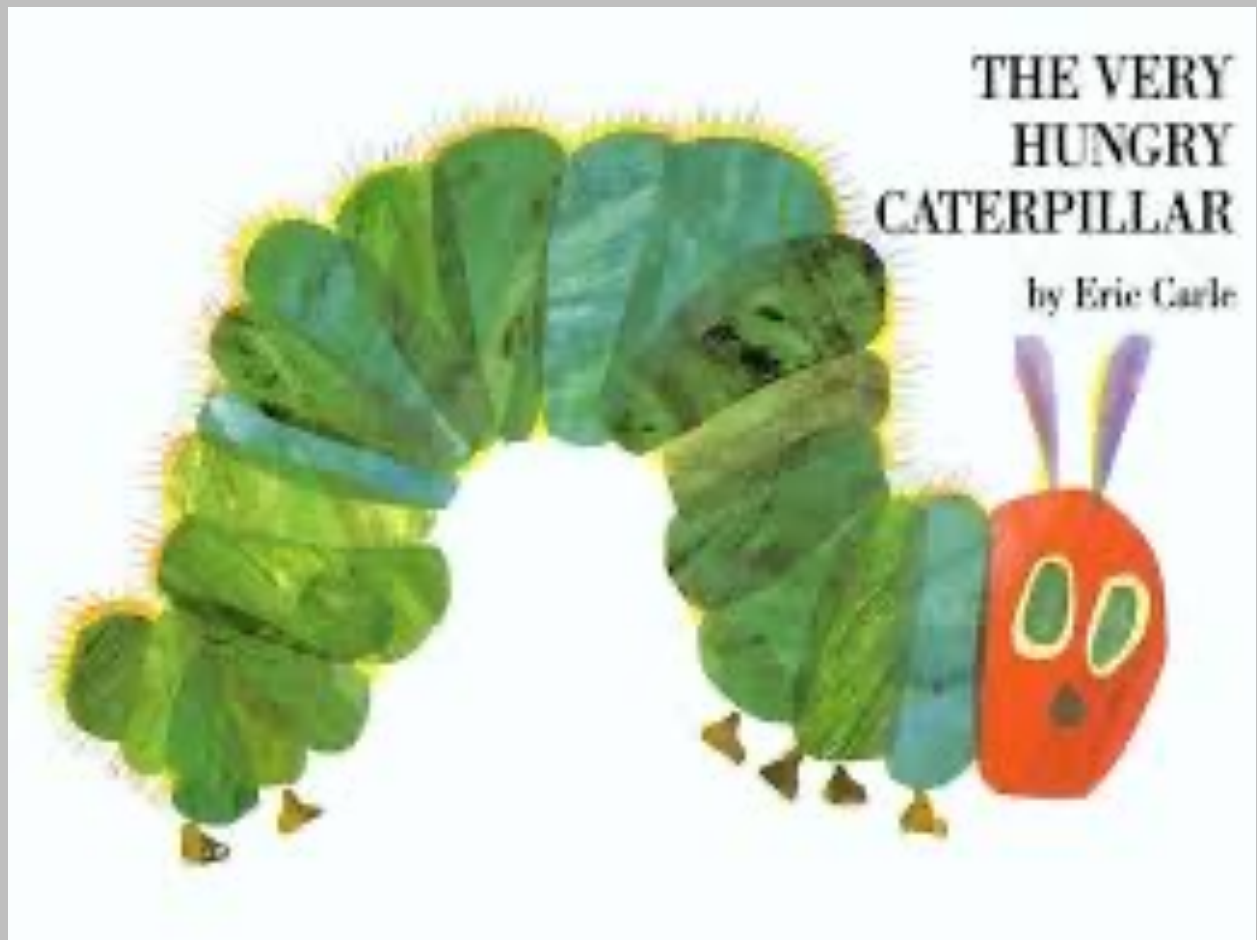




The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes (1765) by John Newberry



The Very Hungry Caterpillar (1969) by Eric Carle

THE EVOLUTION OF CHILDREN’S LITERATURE

Cayley Olsen

Department of English

Results: Illustrations

Illustrations in children’s books have been used to raise appeal for a book and helps to aid readers in what is happening in a book to learn from the content and relate to the characters.

A study was completed to analyze different covers of *Cinderella* from 1800 until 2014 in order to discover the change over time to what the character looked like. The study found that...

- Early books mostly depicted the character of Cinderella in her rags and in a downtrodden state
- Modern books have the character dressed in her ballgown and as a princess

This information leads researchers to believe that through these visuals, the meaning of the character changes from someone that is a model of humility that girls want to emulate to a display that girls want to look like and imitate.

John Locke advocated for illustrations to be used in children’s literature because it would help children to better understand the material due to the importance of using the senses and observation. Locke believed that illustrations would help children become more acquainted with the world and would help teach them morals and manners so they would behave better.



Contrasting Illustrations of *Cinderella*



Little Pretty Pocketbook (1787) by John Newberry

Advertising to Parents

Parents in the early 1800’s were anxious about choosing books for their children to read as the idea was still somewhat new. Some parents feared their children being exposed to stories that would scare them through the characters or the events of the story itself. To help them, journals were created to discuss books and the ideas within in them so that parents could choose what to read to their children.

One of these journals was *The Guardian of Education* by Sarah Trimmer that ran from 1802-1806. The journal contained sections like book reviews and essays on education. Trimmer used the journal to express her thoughts on education, types of literature like fairy tales, and how literature could enhance children's life overall.

Authors of children’s books would also include notes to parents in their books to let them know what the content in the book would be like. An example of this can be found in the 1796 book *The Parent’s Assistant* by Maria Edgeworth. Before the stories begin, Edgeworth include a preface to parents that discusses her values about the stories included and what children could take away from the stories.



UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN
COLORADO

Results cont.

The Process

The first children’s books were printed by William Caxton in the 15th century. John Newberry is a very influential figure in children’s literature as well as John Locke and his ideas during the Enlightenment period about both reading to learn and reading to entertain.

Illustrations changed the print culture and changed the ideas people had about printing such as how print is only words. Moveable books were also a big shift in printing that stemmed from Locke’s ideas about using books in order to learn. Movable books became almost exclusively for children by the 19th century largely because of Locke’s ideas about the importance of materiality when reading books and using them to educate.

Conclusion: Children’s Literature has evolved over time but has kept the same overall goal; entraining and educating children. John Locke wanted kids to gain knowledge and learn how to enter the world and books was and is an accessible way to do that. Printers and publishers were able to expand their businesses and audiences by including new things into books like illustrations, and eventually expand even more to making moveable books that children could interact with. Parents were given help and assistance with journals and notes from authors so that they knew what they wanted to read their children and would eventually help children decide what they would want to read to their own children someday.

References:

- Bottoms, Janet. “The Battle of the (Children’s) Books.” *Romanticism*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2006, pp. 212-222, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=bb4207bb-dd9b-4967-837d-c892685caf05%40sdc-v-sessmgr02>. Accessed 2 April 2021.
- Brown, Gillian. “The Metamorphic Book: Children’s Print Culture in the Eighteenth Century.” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 39, no. 3, 2006, pp. 351–362, www.jstor.org/stable/30053476. Accessed 2 April 2021.
- Brown, Penny. “Capturing (and Captivating) Childhood: The Role of Illustrations in Eighteenth-Century Children’s Books in Britain and France.” *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2008, pp. 419-449, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1754-0208.2008.00115.x>. Accessed 2 April 2021.
- Edgeworth, Maria. *The Parent’s Assistant*, E-book, The Project Gutenberg, 2015.
- Grenby, Matthew, O. ““A Conservative Woman Doing Radical Things”: Sarah Trimmer and The Guardian of Education.” *Culturing the Child 1690-1914: Essays in Memory of Mitzi Myers*, edited by Donelle Ruwe, Scarecrow Press, 2005, pp. 137-161.
- Immel, Andrea. “Children’s Books.” *The Book A Global History*, edited by Michael F. Suarez, S.J. and H. R. Woodhuysen, Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 220-230.
- Lang, Marjory. “Maria Edgeworth’s *The Parent’s Assistant* (1796): a document of social education.” *History of Education*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2006, pp. 21-33, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0046760780070103>, Accessed 3 April 2021.
- Robinson, Linda A., and Wildermith, Susan M. “From Rags to Splendor: The Evolution of Cinderella Cover Illustrations from 1800 to 2014.” *Visual Communication*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2016, pp. 54–70, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1470357215572520?utm_source=su mmon&utm_medium=discovery-provider&#articleCitationDownloadContainer. Accessed 1 April 2021.