PRISM

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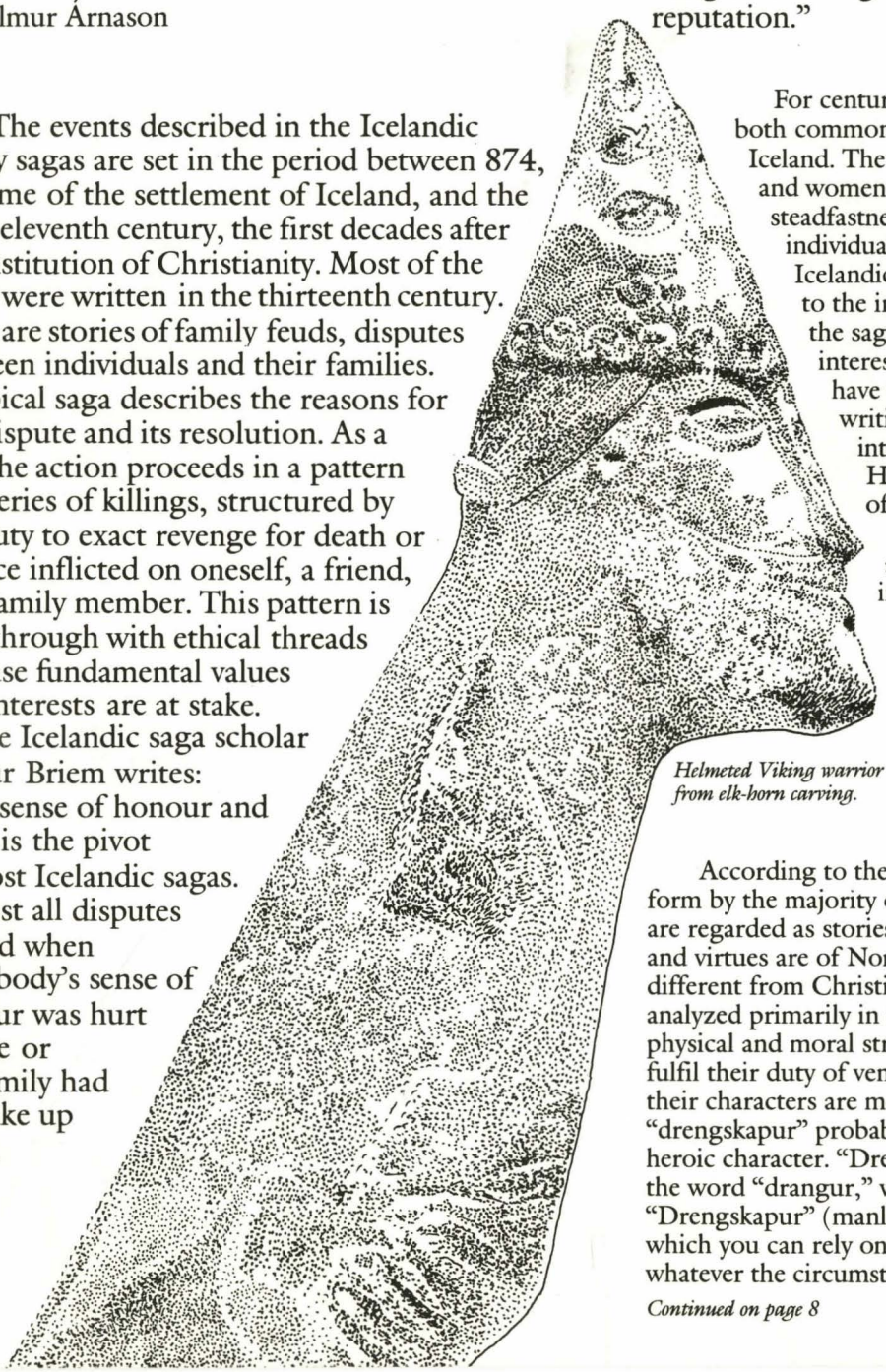
Morality in the Sagas

by
Vilhjálmur Árnason

The events described in the Icelandic family sagas are set in the period between 874, the time of the settlement of Iceland, and the early eleventh century, the first decades after the institution of Christianity. Most of the sagas were written in the thirteenth century. They are stories of family feuds, disputes between individuals and their families. A typical saga describes the reasons for the dispute and its resolution. As a rule the action proceeds in a pattern of a series of killings, structured by the duty to exact revenge for death or offence inflicted on oneself, a friend, or a family member. This pattern is shot through with ethical threads because fundamental values and interests are at stake. As the Icelandic saga scholar Ólafur Briem writes: "The sense of honour and pride is the pivot of most Icelandic sagas. Almost all disputes started when somebody's sense of honour was hurt and he or his family had to make up for it. Without honour life was worthless, and the only thing of a lasting value was an honourable reputation."



Helmeted Viking warrior from elk-horn carving.

For centuries, the Icelandic sagas have nourished both common readers and academic research in Iceland. The saga heroes have inspired young men and women to exemplify integrity, courage and steadfastness in their lives, and the strong individualism and sense of independence in Icelandic culture is undoubtedly due, in part, to the influence of the sagas. The morality of the sagas has also been of significant scholarly interest. The theoretical approaches that have traditionally taken up most of the writings on saga morality can be divided into two major categories. Following Hermann Pálsson, Professor Emeritus of Icelandic Studies at the University of Edinburgh, I shall call them the *romantic* and the *humanistic* interpretations. Here I will briefly outline and analyze these interpretations. I will argue that they provide inadequate understanding of the morality of the sagas because they do not recognize its social roots.

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According to the romantic view, represented in some form by the majority of traditional saga scholars, the sagas are regarded as stories of individual heroes whose values and virtues are of Nordic heathen origin, fundamentally different from Christian ideals. The morality of the sagas is analyzed primarily in terms of personal qualities, and the physical and moral strength which enabled individuals to fulfil their duty of vengeance is the main criterion by which their characters are measured. The Icelandic word "drengskapur" probably signifies best the excellence of the heroic character. "Drengur" (young man) is derived from the word "drangur," which means an erect rock. "Drengskapur" (manliness) is the sort of moral substance which you can rely on in a person, man and woman alike, whatever the circumstances; they will stand upright and

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Through The Prism

The Library of Congress has declared 1989 "The Year of the Young Reader." The editorial board applauds the goal of this national emphasis, namely, "to bring more young people into creative contact with books, reading, and libraries." Accordingly, we have selected the topic of books and their social significance for this issue of *Prism*.

The year-long celebration of young readers provides the perfect occasion for highlighting the Grace Blomquist Children's Literature Collection in the Robert A.L. Mortvedt Library at Pacific Lutheran University. Named for the English professor emerita who initiated our children's literature curriculum and who secured a remarkable array of printed materials to support that curriculum, the Blomquist Collection ranks among the leading west-coast collections of children's literature.

Professor Blomquist's successor, Dr. Suzanne Rahn, shares with us a revealing survey of trends in children's literature since the Second World War. The titles she cites will, of course, hold considerable interest for parents, grandparents, librarians, and teachers. Both "baby-boomers" like myself and today's young adults will encounter influential books from their childhood. And in discussing connections between children's literature and the changing modern scene, Professor Rahn touches on issues of central importance to us all.

The Year of the Young Reader theme is "GIVE US BOOKS - GIVE US WINGS." That theme might just as felicitously be applied to the Publishing and Printing Arts Program at Pacific Lutheran University. The coordinator of the program, Ms. Megan Benton, describes the evolution of the popular academic minor and its liberal arts thrust. High praise for PLU's unique approach to preparing students for careers in book publishing has recently come from the director of Yale University Press, John Ryden. Mr. Ryden writes that "PLU's Publishing and Printing Arts program is a prize. It produces students who come ready to work and ready to begin to be publishing professionals." The Yale University Press has sponsored four summer interns, two of whom are now employed full-time there. The program is thriving, and Megan Benton's article demonstrates why.

Our exchange professor from the University of Iceland, Dr. Vilhjálmur Árnason, opens another window on the world of books. He writes about the Icelandic family sagas, one of the great cultural treasures from the Middle Ages. These prose documents illuminate, Vilhjálmur Árnason argues, the social ethics of their day, with family ties serving as the glue for social interaction. The centrality of the family in turn explains the emphasis in the sagas upon preserving the honor of the family, typically through acts of revenge.

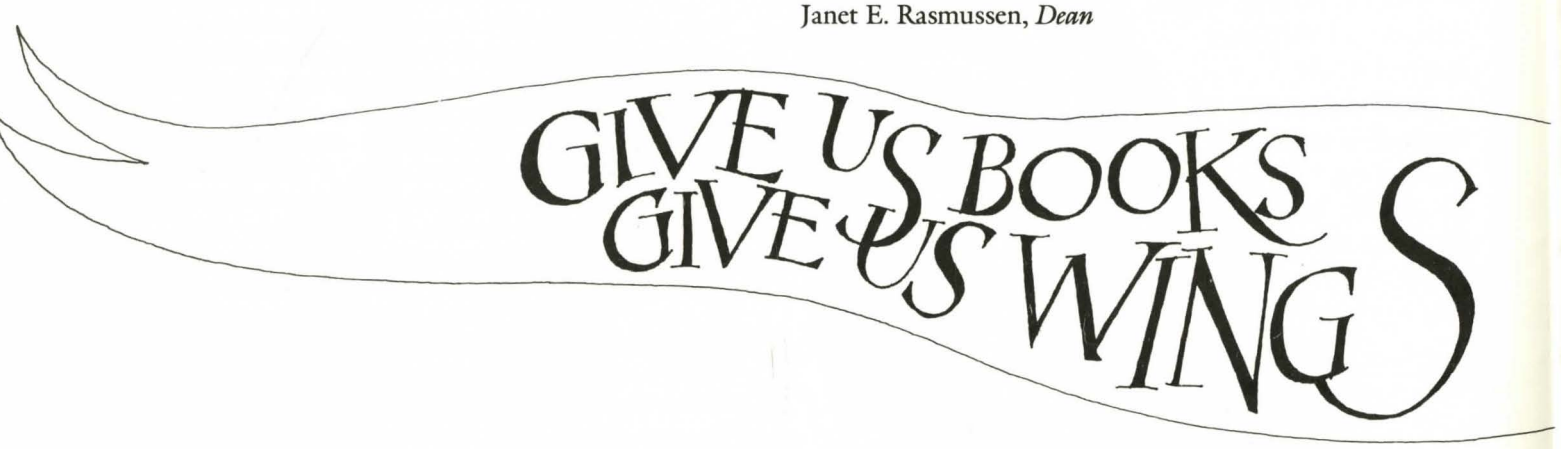
Readers of *Prism* who wish to sample this literature should note that the major titles are available in English translation. My personal favorites among the family sagas include *The Saga of Gisli* and *Njal's Saga. Njal's Saga* is a broadly-based epic which covers Iceland's peaceful conversion to Christianity, while *The Saga of Gisli* offers a tightly-drawn portrait of the honor code. Although belonging to a different category of saga, *The Vinland Sagas* typically kindle the special interest of readers on our side of the Atlantic, since these narratives describe the discovery and settlement of Greenland and North America.

Rounding out our spring issue are contributions from two members of the Department of Religion. We welcome Dr. Lyman Lundeen, who comes to PLU from a distinguished career at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Midway through his first semester, he shares an inspiring scenario of what it means to teach the liberal arts in a Lutheran setting.

Books are being studied and interpreted by humanities faculty and students; they are also being written. We celebrate with Dr. Robert Stivers the appearance of two books during 1989, the first a case method textbook designed for courses in Christian ethics, and the second an edited collection of essays on economic justice.

Much of the work of the Division of Humanities revolves around books—as texts, as representative documents, and as aesthetic items. We are extremely proud of the Blomquist Collection and the Publishing and Printing Arts Program, both of which provide our students with special expertise concerning the world of books. We are likewise proud of the talented faculty who devote their scholarly and pedagogical energies to opening up the world of books for our students. ■

Janet E. Rasmussen, *Dean*



Yesterday and Today in the Mirror of Children's Books

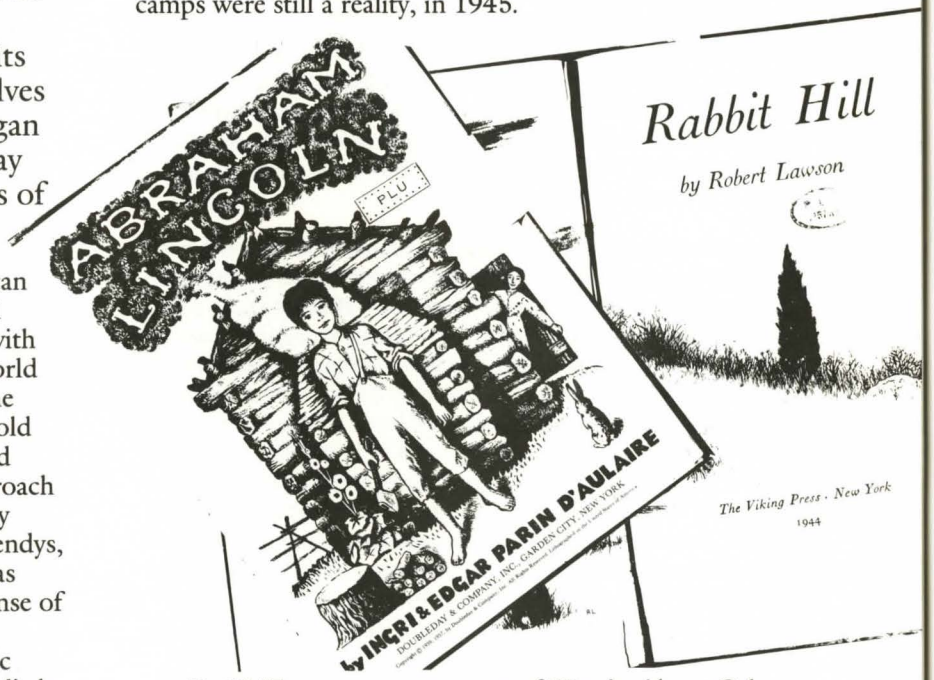
by
Suzanne Rahn

Finding one's way to the Grace Blomquist Children's Literature Collection isn't easy. Tucked into a corner of the library's second floor, all but walled off by bookshelves, the Collection inhabits what is almost—but not quite—a separate space. For many, this is what children's literature itself is or should be, a realm set apart from adult troubles and concerns. And yet, though children's literature possesses themes, patterns, and conventions distinctly its own, it reflects the adult world, too. The shelves of children's books that Grace Blomquist began gathering in the 1940s have a good deal to say about the social, cultural, and ethical changes of the last fifty years.

Looking first at the books of fifty years ago, we can see that World War II did not have the disastrous and long-lasting effect on children's literature associated with World War I. Quality plummeted during the First World War and took twenty years to recover something of the vitality, originality, and high literary standards of the old Golden Age (1865-1914). The Second World War did less psychic damage and caused fewer changes in approach and subject matter. The sturdy, sunny American family stories typical of the late 1930s—the Moffats, the Melendys, the Little House Books—continued through the 40s as well; perhaps they provided an even more welcome sense of security during the war years. Stories celebrating the American past and America's varied regions and ethnic groups, also popular in the nationalist 30s, changed a little more; some took on an aggressive edge. Warrior virtues were glorified in the Indian-fighting tales—*Daniel Boone* and *The Matchlock Gun*—that won Newbery Awards in 1940 and 1942. Less racist or violent but equally patriotic picture books—*Abraham Lincoln* and *They Were Strong and Good* ("They" being Robert Lawson's own American forebears)—won the Caldecott Award in 1940 and 1941. In *Johnny Tremain* (1943), Esther Forbes translated the young soldiers of her own day into the Revolutionary Sons of Liberty. Gearing up for war, American writers fanned the fighting spirit and national pride of American children.

As the war progressed, however, and eventual Allied victory came to seem inevitable, writers, teachers, parents, and librarians began thinking more of the postwar world that their children would inherit. How could they insure against the horror of another Nazi Germany or yet another global war? How could they eliminate racism and intolerance in their own lands?

In children's literature, fighting and dying for one's country began to be less emphasized than tolerance, social justice, and internationalism. That staunch patriot Robert Lawson sounded a new note in the Newbery-winning *Rabbit Hill* (1944), as a suspicious animal community learned to its wonder that "There is enough for all." In the same year, Eleanor Estes, author of the well-loved Moffat books, produced a very different kind of story; *The Hundred Dresses* exposes the thoughtless intolerance of a schoolroom clique toward a Polish immigrant girl. In *Stuart Little* (1945), E.B. White revealed his own private hopes for world government in the chapter in which Stuart asks a class of children to think up some "good laws for the world." Even more bluntly, and bravely, Florence Crannell Means described the cruelty and injustice of the Japanese-American concentration camps through the eyes of two young victims in *The Moved-Outers*—published when the camps were still a reality, in 1945.



By 1947, a separate category of "Books About Other Lands" had appeared in the *Horn Book*'s regular Booklist, as publishers responded to the new demand. Whole series popped up like mushrooms: *The Land and People of* ————, *My Village in* ————, *Pedro Lives In* ————, *The Young Traveler In* ————. I remember the look of them well; in the 1950s, my elementary school library was still full of them. I also remember, unfortunately, how very boring they were, and how all the villages and Pedros seemed the same. I doubt if any children learned from them that other cultures can be truly "other" than, in some ways even preferable to our own; Americanization and "development" are always to be desired in the "Other Lands" of these years.

Also a common Booklist category in the postwar period was "Animal Stories," or "For Pet Lovers," or even specifically "Stories About Horses." These were prime years for the animal story, especially the realistic type in which the animal is not humanized—and most especially stories of horses, cats, and dogs. Walter Farley's "Black Stallion" series, the "Silver Chief, Dog of the North" and "Golden Stallion" series, Colonel Meek's dog stories, *My*

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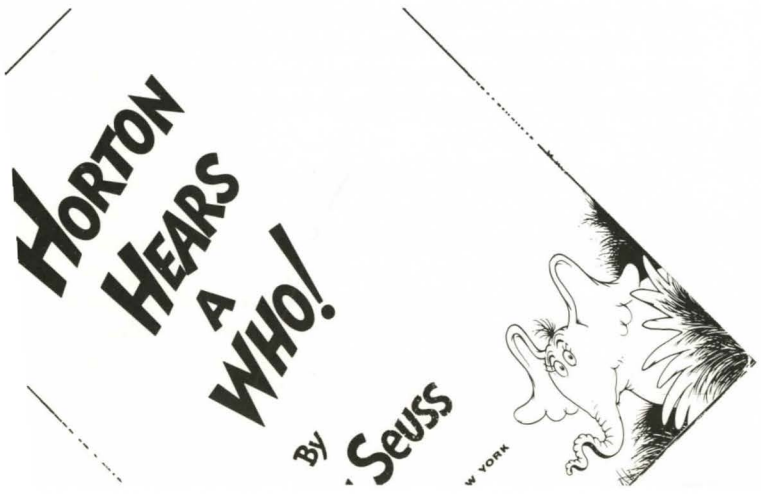
Friend Flicka (1941), *Lassie-Come-Home* (1940), Paul Gallico's classic cat story *The Abandoned* (1950), Esther Averill's "Cat Club" books, Marguerite Henry's semi-fictional horse biographies, whole shelves of horse books by C.W. Anderson, Glenn Balch, Paul Brown, and Fairfax Downey, and (from England) the "pony books" of Monica Edwards and the prolific Pullein-Thompson sisters—all spring from this same period between 1940 and 1955. My local public library had in the 50s a standing bookcase filled entirely with dog stories on one side and horse stories on the other; clearly, that was what children wanted in those days!

As to why, one can only guess that the deep yet simple love between animals and the young may have been good for both child readers and adult writers to contemplate in a complex , impersonal, mechanized, and often wartorn world. Most of these stories focus on the relationship between humans and their animal friends and partners—Alec and the Black, Ken and Flicka, young Joe and Lassie, Agba and Sham in *King of the Wind,* Maureen and Paul and Misty in *Misty of Chincoteague.* To participate vicariously in such a loving and fruitful relationship can be very satisfying for a child. And sometimes children's literature tries to supply what is missing from a culture—in this case, perhaps, an interconnectedness with other creatures.

For other authors, writing for children allows them to express deep-seated fears. Equally characteristic of the post-war years were "little people" fantasies—those stories of miniature people in a world frighteningly dominated by giant-sized human beings. In *Mistress Masham's Repose* (1947) by T.H. White, for example, a colony of Lilliputians has found a hiding place on a long-neglected English country estate, but they are discovered by ten-year-old Maria and narrowly escape being sold into slavery by Maria's villainous guardians. *The Borrowers* (1952) by Mary Norton initiated a whole series about a miniature race that inhabits old human houses and ekes out its precarious existence by "borrowing" the small things that humans will not miss. Stuart of *Stuart Little* (1945), essentially a human in mouse form, leads an equally dangerous and lonely life. In Dr. Seuss's *Horton Hears a Who* (1954), the entire Who world is so small that only Horton the elephant realizes it is a world at all, and attempts to save it from destruction. Rumer Godden's doll stories, beginning with *The Dolls' House* (1947), also belong in this sub-genre. Her doll protagonists think, feel, and suffer like human beings. but are powerless to control what happens to them; they can only "wish" that their human owners will treat them kindly.



Why would so many gifted authors produce such stories at this point in history? The recent experience of World War II may help account for it. The inevitability of that war, its scope, and its enormous cost in human suffering no doubt created a sense of helplessness in any sensitive person; so did this war's unprecedented control of the individual. Not only in the armed services or in concentration camps were people regimented and reduced to numbers, but in civilian life as well. Identity cards, ration cards, the censorship of one's private mail, and in Britain the splitting-up of families as thousands of children were evacuated from their homes—these were new ways of being organized by a faceless and absolute power structure. Nor did the end of the war bring real peace, let alone the just world government that many had hoped for. The British Empire was crumbling, the Cold War was on, and the race for nuclear dominance began to threaten the whole world with destruction. Perhaps awareness of a booming world population also contributed to the sense that what one thought or did or felt as an individual could count for nothing in this great mass of humanity, this "Lonely Crowd."

Americans had enjoyed an unusual degree of freedom in choosing where to live and what to do with their lives. In America the new sense of powerlessness seems to have led to a widespread conviction that some mysterious force from outside must be controlling or attempting to control the country. Many believed that Communists had infiltrated the government and were planning to "take over." Many were ready to believe Vance Packard, whose best-seller *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957) insisted that advertising had achieved thought control and was now secretly manipulating the American people. Science fiction reflected these fears in such novels as Jack Finney's *The Body Snatchers* (1954) and the even scarier movie made from it two years later, in which alien invaders "take over" the bodies of ordinary human beings. The idea of alien invasion or control was also implicit in the UFO phenomenon, which began in 1947 and reached its peak in the early 50s.

We can see, then, that "little people" fantasies also reflected the contemporary sense of powerlessness—of being a very small person in a large and uncaring world—but with less paranoia. The full-size humans in these stories are not alien or evil beings but individuals, some nice, some not so nice, but willing for the most part to tolerate the "little people" or even help them, once they have become aware of them. Indeed, these writers are clearly concerned that children understand how to treat those less powerful than themselves. "A person's a person, no matter how small!" Dr. Seuss reminds them. In *Mistress Masham's Repose,* the Professor warns Maria, who has been thoughtlessly "playing with" the Lilliputians, that "'You must never, never force them to do anything. You must be as polite to them as you are polite to any other person of your own size . . .'" If we realize that "little people" may stand for poor people, or blacks, or Jews, or Central Americans—or for any group whose lives we may control—we can see the global importance of such understanding.

At the same time, the "little people" themselves are portrayed in these stories as fully worthy of respect.

White's Lilliputians have created a thriving, self-sufficient community through their own ingenuity, and are more capable of rescuing Maria than she them. The Borrowers survive discovery by emigrating to a less dependent existence out-of-doors; the Whos save themselves by joining their voices till the outside world can hear them shout. Even Rumer Godden's dolls outlast the evil doll Marchpane, and Stuart Little heads north on his own, still hoping to find his lost Margalo. Courage, intelligence, self-reliance, community, and hope—these are the qualities that keep little people (young readers included) alive in a giant world.

Thus, children's literature of the postwar period echoed the problems and concerns of its day, but also suggested positive solutions. And this pattern continued in the decades to come. In the 1950s and early 60s, for example, the historical novel (particularly in Britain) became a dominant genre; clearly, writers felt it crucial to give young people a sense of connection with the past in an increasingly rootless society. We see the same impulse behind time fantasies like *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1957) by Philippa Pearce, in which the boy Tom finds himself able to step back at night into a Victorian garden and play with the little girl he finds there; in the end, she is revealed to be the old lady who lives upstairs and who has been dreaming of her own childhood. The forging of ties between the generations is another way of connecting with the past, and family stories of this period like Elizabeth Enright's *Gone-Away Lake* (1957) often focus on close relationships between the young and the very old. In their own way, C.S. Lewis's Narnia Chronicles (1949-56) are equally past-oriented; here the insistence is on valuing the traditional literary knowledge of classical myth, Arthurian legend, and folktale—and the traditional beliefs of Christianity.

Anxiety about conformity—a common theme in 50s best-sellers like *The Lonely Crowd* and *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*—shows up in children's literature as well, especially in stories for teenagers. In a society of short haircuts and little white gloves, teenagers were the most rigidly conformist group of all. Seen through the eyes of hindsight, their purposeless, superficial subculture looks as ripe for revolution as the France of Marie Antoinette.

One can hear early rumblings in Louise Fitzhugh's *Harriet the Spy* (1964), with its violations of small taboos of language and behavior, its less than competent parents, and its new-style heroine. Harriet is not nice. Her scowling face, her total lack of social graces, her uncompromising honesty, and her disregard of others' feelings in the pursuit of her own inner goals would have been unimaginable in 1954, and were still handicaps in the early 60s; in a few years, they would become positive virtues. While she puzzled and disturbed contemporary reviewers, children's fiction soon teemed with tough-minded, not-nice little girls. Meg, in Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962), is another early, less extreme example. So is Claudia, in E.L. Konigsburg's *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (1967). Female protagonists began showing up in the once totally male-dominated genre of science fiction as well.

DICEY'S SONG

Women's liberation was, of course, only one facet of the socio-cultural revolution of the 60s and early 70s, and children's literature reflected that revolution in many ways. Old taboos disappeared, and it became fashionable to include vulgar language, gross parental incompetence, single-parent families, and the problems of drugs, alcohol, and teen pregnancy in books for the young. The old-fashioned happy family story disappeared altogether. The historical novel nearly disappeared as well; no child of this new age cared for the dead past. The Civil Rights Movement and its offshoots gave rise first to books about American minorities, then to books by them. For the first time, black and Jewish and Oriental authors and illustrators for children appeared in substantial numbers, and by the late 70s Virginia Hamilton and Mildred D. Taylor and the team of Leo and Diane Dillon were wining Newbery and Caldecott Awards for works that share their own black heritage.

The new awareness of ecology was reflected not only in nonfiction and wild animal stories, and in works of fantasy like Ursula K. LeGuin's *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968), but in stories exploring American Indian cultures as alternative ways of relating to the natural world. Even as young people donned headbands, face paint, and leather fringes, children's authors were writing books like Jean George's *Julie of the Wolves* (1972), in which an Eskimo girl rediscovers her native culture, or Byrd Baylor's picture books—*When Clay Sings* (1972), *The Desert Is Theirs* (1975), and many more—which relate ecological concepts to Southwest Indian ways.

One can see revolution even against narrative conventions—in picture books inspired by comic book formats like Maurice Sendak's *In the Night Kitchen* (1970) and Raymond Briggs' *Father Christmas* (1972), or in the stream-of-consciousness technique Ivan Southall uses in the Carnegie Award-winning *Josh* (1970).

But revolutionary fervor never lasts forever, and social idealism gave way in the mid-70s to the self-realization of the Me Decade. Suddenly people were talking about how important it was to love yourself first; by 1974 there was already a best-seller called *How to Be Your Own Best Friend.* In children's literature this same trend could be traced in the prevalence of "problem novels"—stories revolving around the personal problems of the protagonist—and the popularity of Judy Blume, whose stories encourage the young reader to identify with such self-absorbed protagonists as Margaret in the aptly-named *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* (1970).

Revolution's failure to transform the world can result in a cynical, pessimistic view of future possibilities—and this too became typical of children's literature in the 70s. Children's literature is by nature future-oriented, thinking in terms of what the next generation may achieve; now, for nearly the first time in history, books for young people

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Publishing and Printing as Liberal Arts

by
Megan Benton

It's so familiar that many of us tend to regard it as a cliche—that sometimes-cynical, sometimes-suffering question students inevitably pose, "What can I do with an English major?" My first reply, "What can't you do with an English major?" is quick to illustrate that a major in English, or one in history or philosophy or French, is not a professional credential but an emblem of the sort of liberal education increasingly valued in virtually all professions.

But of course the question they mean to ask is "What can I do that I, with my English-major values, interests, and intellectual abilities, will like to do, will feel is worth doing, and can get paid to do?" To that question one answer for a growing number of students at PLU (about half of them English majors) has been publishing. Over the past fourteen years the English department has gradually developed a curriculum in publishing that both introduces students to what may become for them a satisfying profession and ensures that they bring sophisticated and critical—that is, liberally prepared—perspectives to that profession. That's why I've taken to referring to publishing and printing as liberal arts, to affirm that these courses aim to teach students that the skills of developing and defending independent judgments are as critical to publishing education as the more familiar skills used in editing, producing, and selling books.

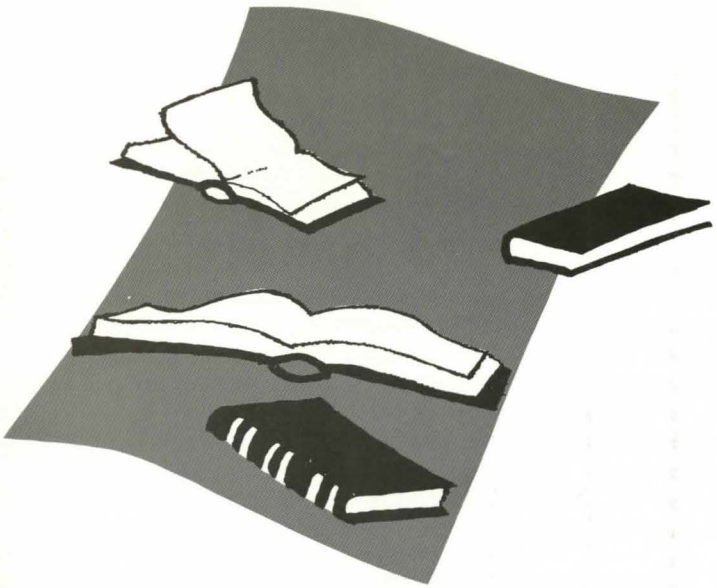
The story of this curriculum, organized just three years ago into a six-course English minor in Publishing and Printing Arts, does much to explain its distinctive qualities. It is a program that emerged through unpredictable opportunities, evolution, and dedication more than by plan or intention. In 1974, Les Elliott—a long-time editor and sales rep for Harper and Row—approached his Tacoma neighbor, PLU English professor Lucille Johnson, about teaching a course that might prepare students for publishing careers. Johnson and then-department chair Paul Benton saw in Les's idea the makings of a good course for Interim, that part of PLU's curriculum least constricted by traditional definitions of proper academic subject matter. The following January Elliott taught the first "World of the Book" class to some fifteen students, four of whom went on to enjoy what was quickly to become one of the course's most attractive features—a paid summer internship with a national publishing house.

For the next half-dozen years Elliott annually taught that course, which soon moved into the ongoing, regular-semester course schedule. By the late seventies a second, two-semester-hour course in copyediting was offered as well, taught by local editor and author Rachel Bard, to provide more sustained practice in the particular skills of editing and proofreading. Enrollments in these two courses remained modest, about fifteen and ten students, respectively. They met no university or major requirements, yet attracted from the start some of the school's best students, usually humanities or communication arts majors exploring professional options.

In 1979 what was to become a further distinguishing feature of the program arrived in the form of an old printing press, cases of type, and assorted printing paraphernalia offered as a gift to the university by a Puyallup printer. Again a generous understanding of the "academic missions" prevailed when then-department chair Dan Van Tassel accepted the gift and, implicitly, the responsibility for seeing it, somehow, put to use. His and others' good-natured commitment to the novel opportunities that the gift presented—despite the many challenges of setting up, let alone operating, the cumbersome equipment—was richly rewarded in 1982 with the creation of the Elliott Press. That first gift of type and press grew into a fullfledged letterpress printing and typography studio, where students may design, typeset, illustrate, print, and bind limited editions of small books or broadsides entirely by hand. The facility now provides a rare humanistic introduction to the aesthetics of bookmaking that many students cherish even after they've learned to manage deftly in the more pragmatic world of computerized typesetting and highspeed offset printing.

By the early eighties Les Elliott was hoping to retire from what had been for him a post-retirement involvement. He recruited me to take over teaching the "World of the Book" course, an enterprise of a very different sort than what I—with a freshly acquired master's degree in history and training in scholarly editing—had ever envisioned. But in another instance of this story's theme of fortuitous adapting to opportunity, I agreed to try. Young, nervous to my fingertips, and at first less adept at addressing the class than several of the students, I nevertheless thus became a teacher. I've taught the publishing courses ever since, except for a year spent acquiring another graduate degree, this one in the book arts.

I returned from that absence with a considerably broader vision of curricular possibilities for what had not yet coalesced into a formal "program" at PLU. That would come in 1985, however, with the official establishment of the Publishing and Printing Arts program and the reconstitution of its central content into four new courses. One, The Book in Society, is a lecture-discussion course that looks at issues such as censorship, biased language, textbook controversies, social implications of romance and other genre fiction, and other aspects of the cultural/commercial tensions in publishing. A second course, called Publishing Procedures, is a workshop simulation in which students evaluate manuscripts and proposals, offer contracts, and edit, design, and plan marketing strategies for a variety of books. The other two are studio courses conducted at the Elliott Press; The Art of the Book I and II allow students to explore the relationship between the literal and the visual, between a text and its physical presentation.



The PPA program is more than just a package of courses (although it is that too, requiring three electives in writing/editing, design/productions, and management/marketing in addition to the core courses). Most notably, it also continues to sponsor several internships each summer, the legacy in part of Les Elliott's many friendships and associations throughout the book world. Each year four to eight students head off to the East Coast, to the Bay Area, or to some other distant spot to sample the life of a poor but independent novice professional. Virtually all are exhilarated not only discovering that they can negotiate in a new city on their own but also gaining the unmistakable confidence in self and skill that comes only from having been proved in "the real world."

As for the internships themselves, a few houses almost always offer one each year, steadfastly sharing our commitment to publishing education. As Elaine Maisner of Yale University Press once wrote, "If Megan Benton is writing about a new intern, it must be spring!" Other houses consistently offering internships over the years include Les Elliott's own beloved Harper and Row in San Francisco, Prentice Hall in New York, and a few smaller houses in the Bay Area. Each year, however, the full assortment of opportunities is different, as publishers respond like any business to fluctuations in staff, budget, schedules, and so forth. Over the last fourteen years, twenty different companies have hosted a total of seventy-three internships. These have involved students in the gamut of publishing work, from writing news releases to arranging author talkshow appearances, proofreading galleys, editing endnotes, securing permissions, checking bluelines, preparing photoready ad copy on the Mac, shooting artwork, and much more, including the ubiquitous tasks of typing, filing, and photocopying in which nearly everyone in publishing shares.

While the particulars of our internships always seem to change, they all tend to reinforce the themes that underscore this program's liberal arts origin. That is, our internships are now predominantly at houses that emphasize quality and purpose in what and how they publish. Such houses are seldom the big-name, New York City publishers, most of which are owned by corporate giants that prefer profits to poetry and blockbusters and miniseries to "serious" fiction or monographs. Instead our students intern with houses whose publishing philosophies seek the same balance between responsibility and reward, between serving text, author, and reader and selling what people will buy, that I stress in the PPA courses. Yes it's a business, I tell students, but a business in making and selling *books* —a product that should by nature be profoundly different from soft drinks, tractor parts, or men's ties. Defining and respecting that difference is now largely in the hands of what are called "small presses" (although some are not so small) to distinguish them from the corporate-driven houses; it is what *Publishers Weekly* editor-in-chief recently highlighted as their "growing and infinitely important" role in the publishing industry.[1] The PLU publishing program thus imbues students with "small press" values—both reflecting the program's place within the humanities and better equipping students for a profession that will satisfy and extend their liberal arts foundation.

And publishers recognize this. For years Les and I had to "sell" an unknown program at an unknown university to enlist prospective internship hosts, but things are changing. Publishers are now beginning to call me, asking for interns or, increasingly, candidates for permanent positions. In the past year or so I've received eight such requests from houses across the country; most often they've been so impressed with a PLU intern or graduate that they trust the program to ensure that other students will be equally well-prepared in the right kinds of ways.

An irony, perhaps, is that I am not always able to provide those interns or employees. There simply aren't enough students in a position to respond to such offers; they may be married or otherwise placebound, committed to other professional directions, or unwilling to compromise academic agendas. This highlights another distinctive and I think important feature of our program: it is a pre-professional program, yes, but most emphatically also one that values educating future consumers of books as much as future producers of them. I insist that understanding why books are published and how they then function in our society is surely as much a part of a liberal education as reading Shakespeare or Hegel or Darwin. It should not be the province of specialists. Consequently, I'm particularly proud that many of the nearly forty students now involved in the program rightly see such publishing education as a complement to other professions—law, the ministry, teaching writing, graphic design, librarianship, public relations, journalism—or simply as an interesting course of study, regardless of "practical" applications.

So, much as I am intensely proud of PLU graduates like Nancy Wendland at Yale, Denise Stoaks at MIT Press, Brenda Satrum at Westview, and the many others who are distinguishing our university with their professional achievements, I am equally pleased that the prelaw students, music majors, and local adult returning students find their way into the publishing courses. They illustrate and motivate best my conviction that the world of books is indeed the world of culture, of play, of beauty, and of knowledge around which, inevitably, the liberal arts revolve. ■

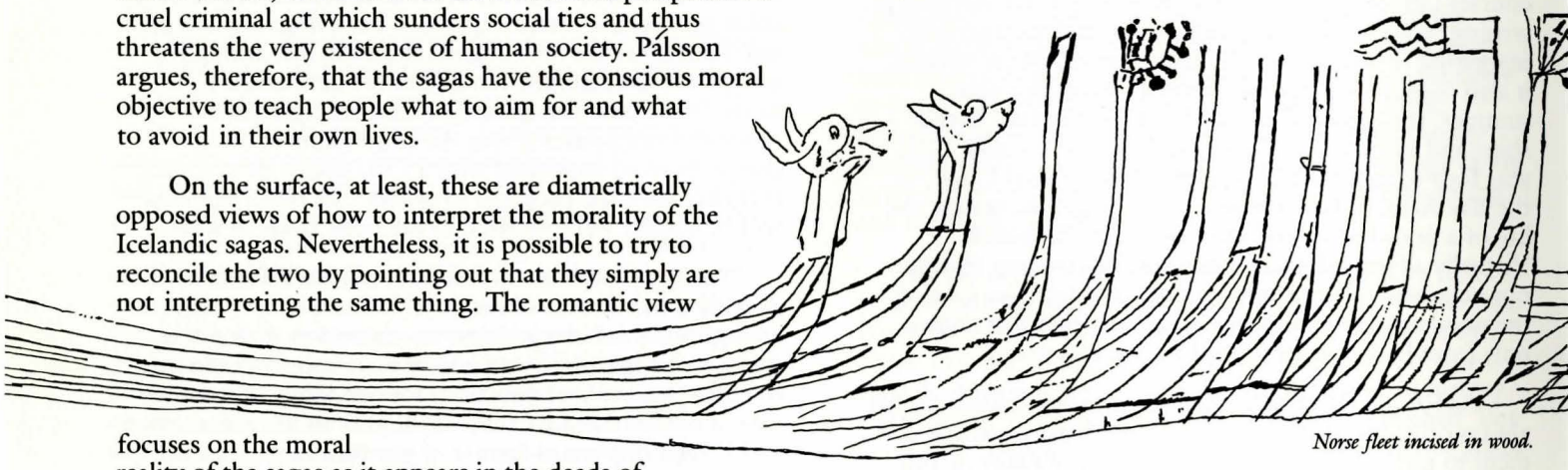
[1]John F. Baker "New Directions in Book Publishing," address at the Pacific Northwest Writers' Conference, Tacoma, WA., July 1988.

Continued from page 1

serene in the face of danger. Sigurdur Nordal pointed out that the closest term of equivalence to "drengskapur" is goodness-based-on-strength. This is contrasted with goodness-based-on-fear, which is exemplified by the despicable kind of person whose "goodness" is only skin deep and on whom you can never rely.

The humanistic view of saga morality is best understood by its opposition to the romantics. Hermann Pálsson, the major spokesman for the humanists, has argued in several books and articles that the romantic conception of saga morality is misleading if not positively wrong. Pálsson tries to show that the sagas are much better understood as Christian lessons about the deserving defeat of those who show excessive pride and arrogance. The stories are not written in order to glorify the so-called pagan heroes of Icelandic sagas but rather to preach peace and moderation in the spirit of Christianity. The duty of vengeance, which in the romantic view is the vehicle of the heroic virtues, becomes from the humanistic perspective a cruel criminal act which sunders social ties and thus threatens the very existence of human society. Pálsson argues, therefore, that the sagas have the conscious moral objective to teach people what to aim for and what to avoid in their own lives.

On the surface, at least, these are diametrically opposed views of how to interpret the morality of the Icelandic sagas. Nevertheless, it is possible to try to reconcile the two by pointing out that they simply are not interpreting the same thing. The romantic view focuses on the moral reality of the sagas as it appears in the deeds of the characters, while the humanistic view is trying to unfold the ethical intention of the author. The romantics would then be seen as trying to describe the historical ethos of the Icelandic free state, wheras the humanists are making normative judgments about the morality of this time from the viewpoint of an author raised in a Christian society, approximately 300 years after the events of the sagas supposedly took place.



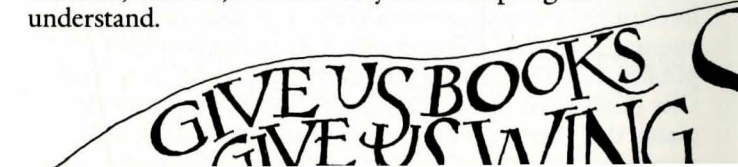
Norse fleet incised in wood.

Although there is nothing wrong in this attempt at reconciliation, it oversimplifies the issue because it conceals the *common presuppositions* of these interpretations. These are presuppositions about the nature of interpretation and about the nature of morality. I shall take a brief look at each of these and try to show how they have affected the research of saga morality.

Representatives of both the romantic and the humanist view claim that what matters is the *story itself,* the ethical laws that are at work in the saga narrative. As a rule, they proceed as if these laws can be unfolded by a presuppositionless reading of the sagas. Hermann Pálsson clearly states this hermeneutical neutrality when he writes: "What matters is to thoroughly read the story and then discuss its ideas without prejudice." This emphasis on letting the story speak for itself can be an important guiding idea of

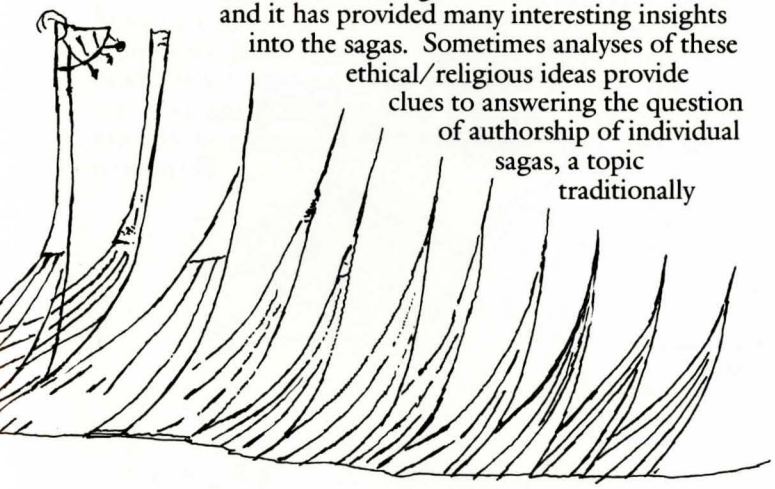
a naive and dogmatic understanding of interpretation if it is seen as a claim to a correct meaning which can be grasped independently of the perspective and presuppositions which the researcher brings into the hermeneutical process. "Hypotheses are nets: only he who casts will catch," is cited by Novalis. There is no reading free from all presuppositions and pre-judgments about the subject matter. Interpretation is inevitably a process of interplay between questions and answers. The meanings of the text are disclosed only under the perspective of theoretical hypotheses which formulate the questions to which the text is bound to respond and without which it would tell us nothing. A presuppositionless reading would be empty, like the nets of those who never cast.

Rather than going into the various presuppositions that have guided the traditional interpretations of saga morality, I will at this point take a short-cut to the prejudgment that has probably had the greatest effect in the history of this subject. In spite of substantial differences, the romantics and the humanists have agreed upon the decisive issue of which question is the most important to ask when they are trying to unravel the ethics of the Icelandic sagas. This hermeneutic agreement is implied in their substantial disagreement. The major issue of debate is whether the ethics of the sagas is heathen or Christian; the common agreement is that the answer to this question provides the key to understanding saga morality. It is of major importance to recognize this common prejudice and try to see its effect upon these interpretations, the quality and variety of the catch they have landed. The predominance of this question in investigations of the morality of the sagas has not only seriously narrowed their scope but is also responsible for their limited ability to provide a theoretical account of their subject matter. In order to flesh out this accusation I will try to show how this question has led to an impoverished notion of *morality* which is, after all, the issue they are attempting to understand.



II

When researchers of saga morality ask whether the morality of the sagas is heathen or Christian, they must presume that there is a close relationship between morality and religious beliefs. In effect they see the relationship in such a way that morality is primarily a set of beliefs and ideals which are a part of a system of religion. The task before them, therefore, is to inquire into the moral ideas of old Norse mythology and/or medieval Christianity and attempt to understand the words and deeds of the saga characters in their light. This is a worthwhile task and it has provided many interesting insights into the sagas. Sometimes analyses of these ethical/religious ideas provide clues to answering the question of authorship of individual sagas, a topic traditionally



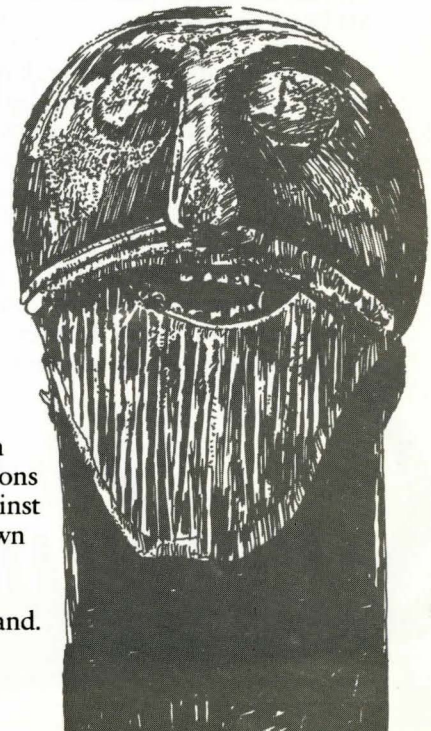
of great interest to most saga scholars. Indeed, the romantic and humanistic attempts to understand saga morality are often closely linked with arguments about what the author's intention was with the saga. Was the author displaying the glory of the past, portraying the great heroes of the free-state who lived according to heathen ideals and thrived without both king and Christ? Or, alternatively, was the author attempting to persuade his readers of the moral advantage of the Christian virtues by showing the defeat of arrogant and cruel characters?

Even though the answers to these questions may sometimes point towards the moral of the story, they do not tell us much about the morality of the sagas. If we are to understand and attempt to explain the duties, virtues and moral principles at work in the sagas, they need to be scrutinized against the social context of medieval Iceland, the social reality which nourished both the saga characters and the saga writers. In order to substantiate this claim, two things need to be considered: the nature of the sagas and the nature of morality. The former is a complicated and much debated matter which cannot be discussed here, but in any event it is clear that the story-teller is remarkably "absent" in the text and is preoccupied with letting the characters speak for themselves in words and deeds. If the authors or story-tellers had any particular ethical view of the characters, they usually succeed in hiding it. Nevertheless, the author presumably provides the structuring principles for the text, which may sometimes imply some sort of moralizing, in the spirit of medieval exempla. But even when that is the case, the actions of the saga characters still need to be explained in terms of the socio-moral principles that were operating in the Icelandic free-state. The authors could, of course, have arranged the events of the saga in a way which reflects their ethical/religious viewpoints, but they could not have created the socio-moral reality that is always there in the background.

A distinction made by the German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, can be helpful at this point. Hegel distinguishes between two senses of morality: *Moralität,* which refers to the conscientious moral beliefs of the individual who is typically critical of the moral order of the community, and *Sittlichkeit,* the objective ethical order which is the structure of rules, obligations and normative principles which people internalize by living and being brought up in a particular ethical community. Hegel teaches convincingly that in traditional societies the bonds of *Sittlichkeit,* or customary ethical life, are much stronger than in modern societies where the idea of the morally autonomous individual becomes predominant.

It seems to me that the type of morality that we need to understand in the Icelandic sagas is *Sittlichkeit,* objective ethical order, rather than subjective moral beliefs. Or, rather, that every individual quality, value or ethical judgment, whether that of the saga characters or of the saga authors, is parasitic upon this objective ethical substance of the sagas. The romantic and humanistic interpretations of saga morality are both attempts to deal with the subject matter without tracing its roots to this moral substance, the social duties and rules of conduct that were peculiar to the free-state. Instead, they look either to an imaginary ethical/religious superstructure which is not to be found in the sagas or they see morality merely in terms of individual moral qualities and sentiments, which can be understood without reference to the social network of which they are a part. These individualistic and religious strains in the romantic and the humanistic views account for their inability to explain saga morality. It stands in the way of understanding when saga characters are praised or blamed in light of a system of moral beliefs. Their actions need to be understood against the background of their own society, the existing and non-existing social institutions in ancient Iceland.

Fierce Viking mask carving found with the Oseberg ship-burial.



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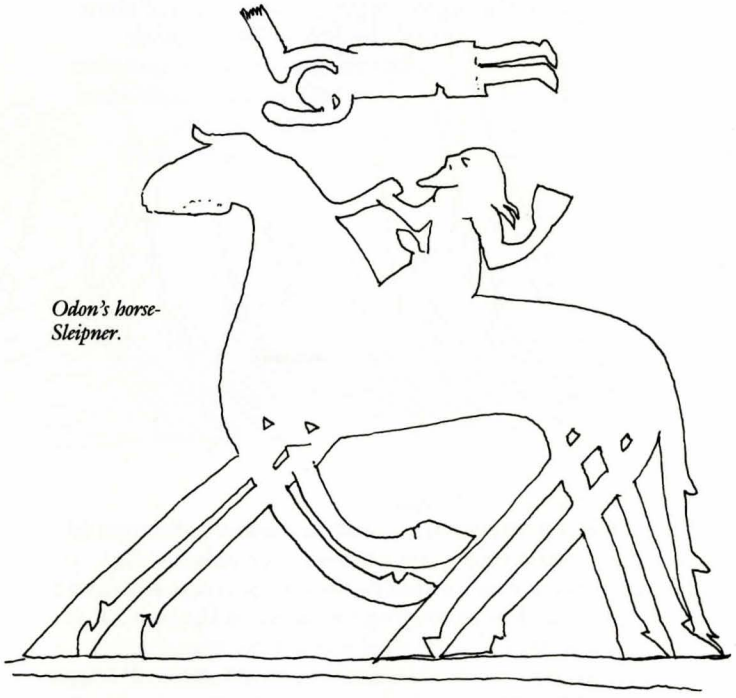
The moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre rgued along Hegelian lines that in heroic ties, morality and social structure are one he same. There is no morality distinct from roles and what one ought to do is ed in what one is, "For the given rules n assign men their place in the social order and with it identity also prescribe what they owe and what is to them and how they are to be treated and regarded y fail and how they are to treat and regard others if ail" *(After Virtue,* p. 116). MacIntyre appropriately he verb to "owe" for what obligates people in heroic ies. In Icelandic the verb is "skulda", from which the s "skyldur" and "skylda" are derived, the former ing "blood-related" and the later meaning "duty" or gation."

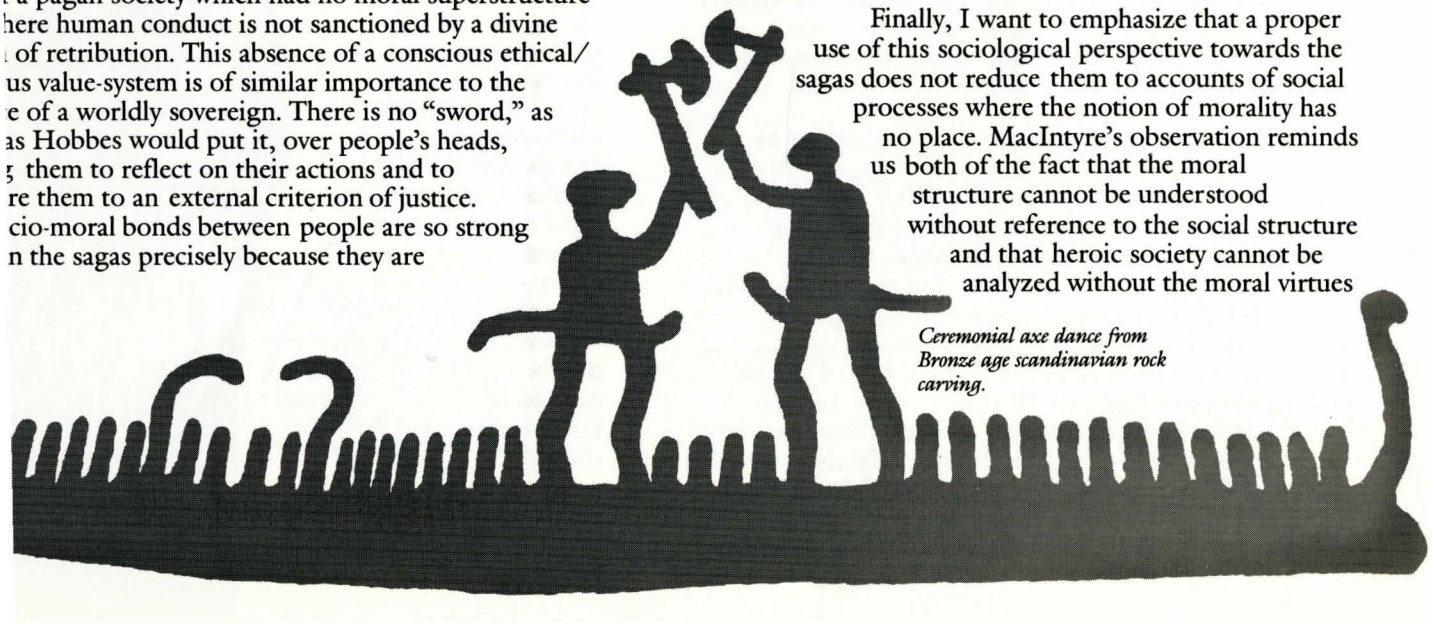
Family ties still imply moral duties, even in societies e various social institutions and agencies are specifi- designed to protect the rights and welfare of the ns. In a society which had no such official institu- the moral obligations implicit in family ties were not important from an ethical point of view, they were of mportance for all, because individuals had to rely on selves, family and friends if their lives were threatened. over, familial obligations were necessary for the func- f this society because they were part of a system of ons that directed feuds into socially accepted channels indered their escalation to such an extent that the fabric would be ruptured. It seems to me that the most important factor that accounts for the specific es of the morality of the sagas is the fact that the dic free state lacked all the social institutions that are ally perceived as necessary in order to maintain law rder. It had its laws — the sagas are famous for their ite descriptions of legal procedures — but it had no tive power or public institutions to enforce court ons, which have aptly been characterized as a ed vengeance" rather than an exercise of justice. The ry objective of court decisions was to secure peace, so ore powerful party to the case was likely to receive n's share.

is important to notice, however, that this morality is f a pagan society which had no moral superstructure here human conduct is not sanctioned by a divine of retribution. This absence of a conscious ethical/ us value-system is of similar importance to the e of a worldly sovereign. There is no "sword," as as Hobbes would put it, over people's heads, them to reflect on their actions and to re them to an external criterion of justice. cio-moral bonds between people are so strong n the sagas precisely because they are accepted without question. It is never a question whether one is to (not to mention *ought* to) take vengeance for a slain brother — only how and, primarily, when. The duty of vengeance was strongly sanctioned by public opinion and one who did not fulfill this obligation was a useless person. This duty was basic to the moral structure. It upheld the reputation and family honour by leaving no doubt that this family would leave no debt unpaid. "Honour is conferred by one's peers and without honour a man is without worth," writes Alasdair MacIntyre (p. 118). The sense of honour, which the romantic view nostalgically sees primarily as a character trait of proud pagan individuals, is thus necessitated by the social structure of the saga society. The heroic character was bred by a society where reliability and courage were the most important characteristics of the person, not because they were part of a heathen moral code but because they were matters of life and death.

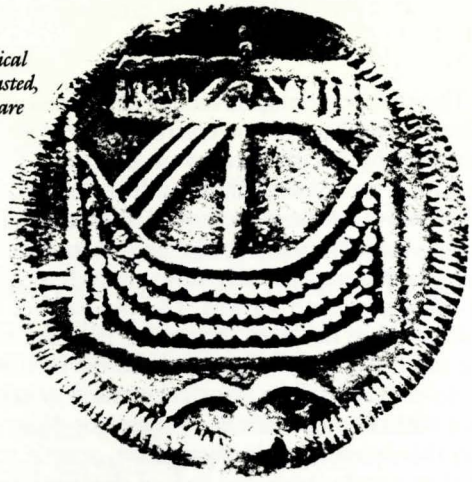


Odon's horse- Sleipner.

Finally, I want to emphasize that a proper use of this sociological perspective towards the sagas does not reduce them to accounts of social processes where the notion of morality has no place. MacIntyre's observation reminds us both of the fact that the moral structure cannot be understood without reference to the social structure and that heroic society cannot be analyzed without the moral virtues

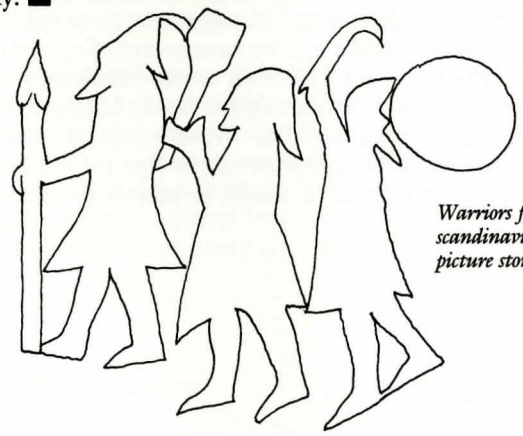


Ceremonial axe dance from Bronze age scandinavian rock carving.



Coin showing typical Viking, single-masted, longship with square sail.

which enable individuals to carry out their roles. When the sagas are viewed in this light, we see better than before why the moral duties are so unconditional in the sagas. They were certainly not generated by a quasi-Kantian sense of duty ingrained in the hero's heart; duties are absolute in the sense that everything of worth in life is at stake. And heroes are those who find themselves in situations where there is no choice other than betraying life or accepting death. That is why the heroic condition is one of fate; the whole weight of circumstances brings about destiny which can only be accepted with humourous courage and stoic serenity. ■



Warriors from a scandinavian picture stone.

For readers interested in the literature on this subject:

Representing the romantic view:
Walter Gehl, *Ruhm und Ehre bei den Nordgermanen.* Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt Verlag, 1937.
Vilhelm Grønbech, *The Culture of the Teutons I.* London: Oxford University Press, 1932.
Several Icelandic authors hold similar substantial views on saga morality without grounding it in the heathen religion. Among the best known are Sigurdur Nordal, *Íslenzk menning I* (Icelandic Culture I). Reykjavik: Heimskringla, 1942, and Ólafur Briem, *Íslendingasögurnar og nútíminn* (The Icelandic sagas and the present). Reykjavik: Almenna bókafélafid, 1972.

Representing the humanist view:
Hermann Pálsson, *Art and Ethics in Hrafnkels saga.* Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1971.
———, "Icelandic Sagas and Medieval Ethics," *Medieval Scandinavia 7* (1974), pp. 61-75.
See also Theodore M. Andersson, "Ethics and Politics in *Hrafnkels saga.*" *Scandinavian Studies* Vol. 60, no. 2 (1988), pp. 293-309.

Representing the sociological view:
Jesse Byock, *Feud in the Icelandic Saga.* University of California Press, 1982.
M.I. Steblin-Kamenskij, *The Saga Mind.* Odense University Press, 1973.
Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue.* University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.

Children's Books
Continued from page 5

began to have gloomy, depressing, even tragically violent endings. In Kin Platt's *Hey Dummy* (1975), to take one clear example, the protagonist tries to befriend a boy who is mentally handicapped. As he discovers that neither parents, nor teachers, nor anyone in his society is willing to help, he himself retreats mentally from the cold world, till by the end he too has become a "dummy," reduced to permanent catatonia. Jerry Renault, the protagonist of Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* (1974), is the only boy in his school to refuse to participate in the annual chocolate sale—thus striking, symbolically, at the capitalist and competitive foundations of society. He is not only totally ostracized, but emotionally and physically destroyed. Kate, the heroine of Cormier's *After the First Death* (1979), is shot by terrorists when she tries to save a busload of children. There is a strong sense in these books of betrayal—not only by one's family and one's society, but by one's own ideals.

What of the 1980s? Though it is hard to make out a design that is still being drawn, we can at least guess at the shape of the decade now coming to its close. We can even turn things around, and deduce from the children's books of the 80s what our society most values in what it hopes to pass on to children.

It was obvious even at the time that the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 signaled a new, aggressive conservatism in America—a deliberate turning away from the revolutionary spirit of the 60s and the pessimism of the 70s, back to a more secure and happier imagined past. A return to "family values" has been a major and popular feature of this new conservatism; for several years running, the top-rated TV show has featured an old-fashioned happy family called the Huxtables, and the Ewings of *Dallas,* which also achieved worldwide popularity in the 80s, cling to a sense of "Family" as their one redeeming virtue.

It's not surprising, then, that family stories have made a comeback in the realm of children's literature. But while one can (by force) turn back the clock, one can't undo what passing time has done. The families of the 80s are not those of the 50s. Even on television, most mothers work outside the home, and not all families are pale-skinned. In today's family stories for children, adults are now as fallible as the young—though portrayed with more sympathy than they were at their low point in the mid-70s. Family structure seldom corresponds to what was once the standard pattern of a man, a woman, and their children. "Family" itself has to be re-defined, and "happiness" is achieved only with great difficulty and against great odds. Yet there is now a sense that happiness is possible.

Musings on the Promise of "Liberal Arts"

by
Lyman T. Lundeen

Being new on campus makes one take notice of special features of this school. One of them is the close tie between a Lutheran church heritage and the tradition of liberal arts education. My first impression is that they fit together well. Still, the question of how they work in tandem is compelling. Wonder about just that relationship leads me to muse about this type of education.

Having just come through a political campaign where one "L-word" may have lost most of its meaning in battle, it's interesting to me that we can still pursue the "liberal" arts in education. Yes, we even want to celebrate the liberating arts which can keep people in touch with the deeply human and humane features of inquiry.

Perhaps after the last national election some would think we need to drop the word "liberal" from the educational enterprise. Doesn't this "L-word" need to go? No! But we need to spell out—again and again—just what's liberal about the liberal arts and how that interrelates with other educational commitments.

When the liberal arts are studied in a school that bears the Lutheran label, the confusion may increase. Here's another "L-word" that evokes various visions, both restrictive and liberating. I see its presence in the name of the school as a sign of a rich Christian heritage that can help sustain initiatives in the liberal arts. Let me suggest three points where the Lutheran heritage and the liberal arts are interrelated.

Space for Inquiry

First, the Lutheran emphasis on continuing tension between faith and all political agendas deserves notice. Christian faith can never be equated with any one way of organizing society. It will fit better with some than with others, but prescriptions for the social order always reflect the need for persistent revision in the light of new circumstances. We also need an awareness of inherent deficiencies even in our own favorite proposals for society. The very best political solutions always bring with them some rigidity and the distortion of the very values they intended to enhance. Christian faith is one perspective that leads us to expect that Lutherans, in particular, have clearly affirmed the ongoing need for a little distance between the two perspectives of faith and politics. They made it part of the Augsburg Confession. In that document Lutherans resist the identification of church and state, while yet encouraging Christian involvement in the political process. There must be interaction with the political-social order; yet there must be tension.

It is in this space between the perspective of faith and all political agendas that we focus on the concern for liberal arts. The liberal arts help us work through alternative directions for human life in society by resisting all reduction of learning to apparently successsful methodologies. The liberal arts grasp for connections which go beyond technology to value and purpose. They explore the contours of harmony and chaos that confront every human being. But space is necessary to do that. There has to be some place to stand back to think and dialogue about the decisions we face. Good education requires space for thought, and needs help in keeping an arena free for such discourse. The Christian faith, in its better moments, has always provided that room for reflective thought. It has helped keep the doors for thought and education open by its resistance to political pressure.

Politics is only one example—but it's a good one. Politics all too easily becomes the sheer exercise of power. It's a contest, either on the military model, or in the emerging economic competitive mode. It can also be the amassing of votes by whatever kinds of manipulation the media now allow. Politics turns to questions of who's on what side. The only issue may be how to get people from one side to the other. How quickly the ability to consider alternatives is lost in the process. As Kurt Vonnegut forecast in his *Breakfast of Champions,* the whole significance of ideas can degenerate into facile labels for friends and enemies.

Liberal arts education and our Lutheran heritage combine in their concern for the effective use of the space between values and action. They both want to explore value perspectives and relate them to concrete proposals for implementation. "Stop and think," the liberal arts and Christian faith instruct us. It's like breathing. Thoughtful, critical concern gives life to bodies that otherwise merely collide, bump, and fall on each other. It raises consciousness. It articulates assumptions. It helps people pause for a moment and talk about conflicting agendas and outcomes. "Look before you leap" might be the motto. Maybe that's why on the academic side this thrust is called liberal *arts.* That's not just a way of thinking or speaking, but an attempt to help people see in fresh ways. Here's a vision that invites toward broad horizons and imaginative projections. Why not honor the way our Christian heritage contributes to just that kind of educational enterprise?

There is a step here toward recovering "liberal" as a usable "L-word." Liberal arts is liberal in that it attempts to free us from the knee-jerk reaction of both inherited and contemporary solutions. It invites us to stand back from sheer competition for conversation and other forms of sharing that might reveal both positive and negative features of any diagnosis or proposal. It's liberal because it can free us from being trapped in the flow, whether that is party allegiance or other forms of radically partisan conflict.

Yes, liberal arts assumes that the identification and criticism of alternatives are helpful. It is optimistic about the capacity of study to make things somewhat better for humanity. Yet it also has its pessimistic side. It need not be naively "liberal." It realistically demonstrates the fact that humans have tendencies to destroy themselves. Just as "art"

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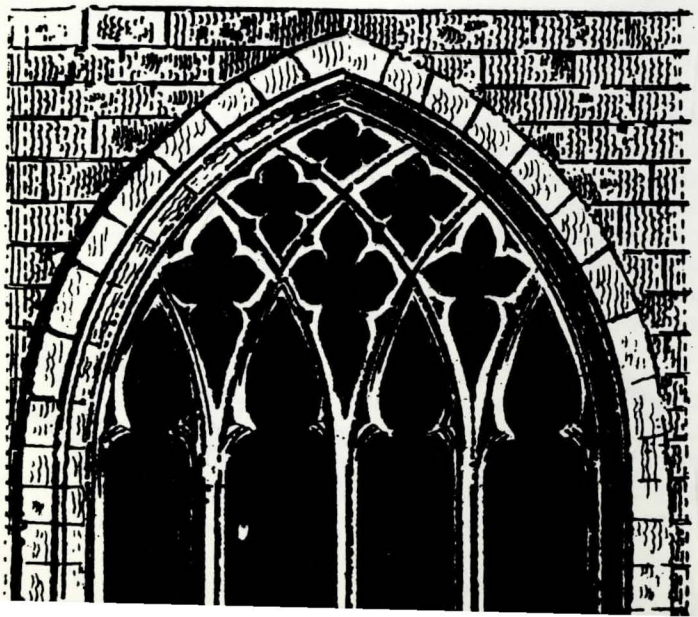
can expose both harmony and deep conflicts, so the liberal arts often are at their best uncovering tragic patterns where the precariousness of all human achievement comes through clearly. In the space that Christian faith helps to generate, there is room for recognition of the "sin" factor. In this sense, the connection between Lutheran and liberal can make sense as supportive of solid, critical scholarship. It's one of God's gifts that we have space to think and light to see. No less is it a blessed gift to have some leverage against simplistic denials of the human capacity for evil.

a Holistic Approach

A second point of contact between our Lutheran heritage and the liberal arts can be seen as the appreciation of the whole human being. Both Christian faith and education have needed to resist trends that would compartmentalize or rationalize the pursuit of truth. The contemporary preoccupation with technology presents just such a challenge.

One can see here in the Lutheran heritage an emphasis on faith as involving the whole person that can be helpful. For Luther, faith was the posture of trust that included intellect, feeling and will. It kept these diverse features of human life in touch with one another. Trusting in something shaped the entire direction of human life. Any attempts to force people into a methodological mold or straightjacket is a threat to faith understood in this holistic way.

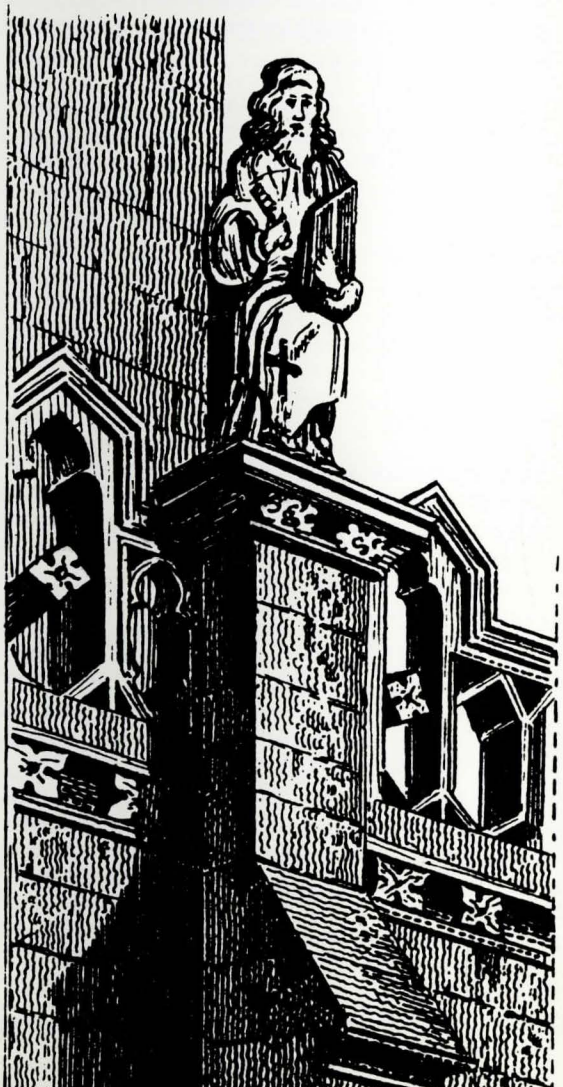
Just as faith cannot be reduced to believing certain facts or prescriptive methods, so good education needs avenues that will open up aesthetics and holistic experience. What we know turns out to be mixed up with what we feel and will. At this point "liberal arts" reaches out a hand in support of some of the concerns of Christian faith, and the hand that reaches back in return helps, too. Faith understood holistically makes room for the concerns of liberal arts. The liberal arts in turn contribute to understanding the place of faith and give it contact with the whole range of human involvement.



It is not by accident that art and music have a central place in the Lutheran heritage. Bach is one who expresses Christian faith in his music. Stained glass and cathedrals are not to be reduced to rubble. Art forms are one way that both faith and intellect come to expression and gain perspective.

Here we have a bridge on which to walk between concern for faith and inquiry. It's a bridge that some in our society would tear down. They would just as soon turn education toward the immediately profitable or apparently obvious social concerns. Lutheran commitments and the liberal arts have a common stake in education that keeps the door open for imaginative and critical perspective. Yes, even a common concern for moral consideration where issues of what may be willed for society are surfaced and clarified.

One can see this holism as a common interest in keeping people in the forefront of our academic concern. Feelings are not irrelevant. Questions of right and wrong are not out of bounds. The deepest experiences and intentions of human beings can never be left out of our educational concerns. It is people who have faith and people who are to be educated. That puts this Lutheran inheritance in partnership with the commitment of the liberal arts to educate persons, rather than merely transmitting information and skills.



Yesterday and Today in the Mirror of Children's Books

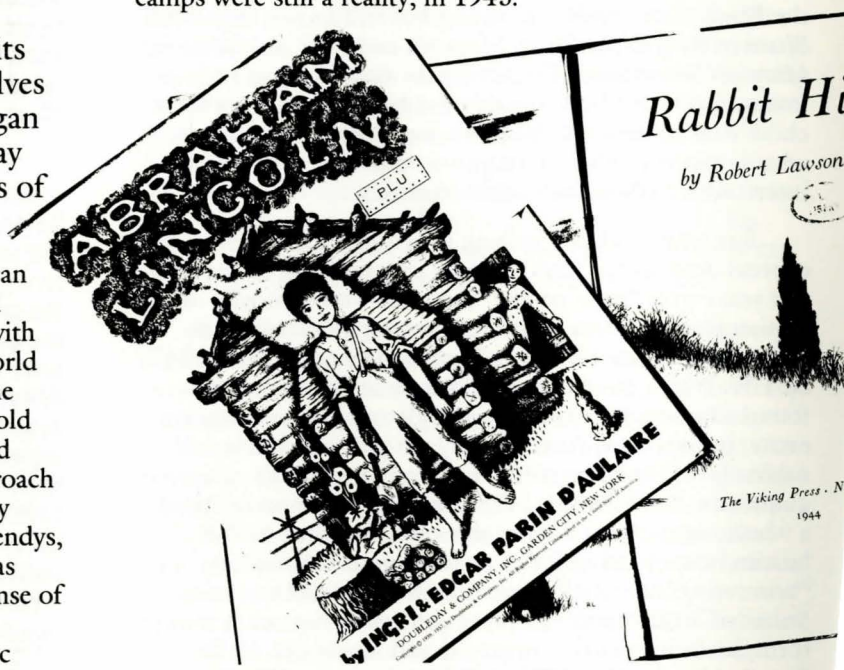
by
Suzanne Rahn

Finding one's way to the Grace Blomquist Children's Literature Collection isn't easy. Tucked into a corner of the library's second floor, all but walled off by bookshelves, the Collection inhabits what is almost—but not quite—a separate space. For many, this is what children's literature itself is or should be, a realm set apart from adult troubles and concerns. And yet, though children's literature possesses themes, patterns, and conventions distinctly its own, it reflects the adult world, too. The shelves of children's books that Grace Blomquist began gathering in the 1940s have a good deal to say about the social, cultural, and ethical changes of the last fifty years.

Looking first at the books of fifty years ago, we can see that World War II did not have the disastrous and long-lasting effect on children's literature associated with World War I. Quality plummeted during the First World War and took twenty years to recover something of the vitality, originality, and high literary standards of the old Golden Age (1865-1914). The Second World War did less psychic damage and caused fewer changes in approach and subject matter. The sturdy, sunny American family stories typical of the late 1930s—the Moffats, the Melendys, the Little House Books—continued through the 40s as well; perhaps they provided an even more welcome sense of security during the war years. Stories celebrating the American past and America's varied regions and ethnic groups, also popular in the nationalist 30s, changed a little more; some took on an aggressive edge. Warrior virtues were glorified in the Indian-fighting tales—*Daniel Boone* and *The Matchlock Gun*—that won Newbery Awards in 1940 and 1942. Less racist or violent but equally patriotic picture books—*Abraham Lincoln* and *They Were Strong and Good* ("They" being Robert Lawson's own American forebears)—won the Caldecott Award in 1940 and 1941. In *Johnny Tremain* (1943), Esther Forbes translated the young soldiers of her own day into the Revolutionary Sons of Liberty. Gearing up for war, American writers fanned the fighting spirit and national pride of American children.

As the war progressed, however, and eventual Allied victory came to seem inevitable, writers, teachers, parents, and librarians began thinking more of the postwar world that their children would inherit. How could they insure against the horror of another Nazi Germany or yet another global war? How could they eliminate racism and intolerance in their own lands?

In children's literature, fighting and dying for one's country began to be less emphasized than tolerance, social justice, and internationalism. That staunch patriot Robert Lawson sounded a new note in the Newbery-winning *Rabbit Hill* (1944), as a suspicious animal community learned to its wonder that "There is enough for all." In the same year, Eleanor Estes, author of the well-loved Moffat books, produced a very different kind of story; *The Hundred Dresses* exposes the thoughtless intolerance of a schoolroom clique toward a Polish immigrant girl. In *Stuart Little* (1945), E.B. White revealed his own private hopes for world government in the chapter in which Stuart asks a class of children to think up some "good laws for the world." Even more bluntly, and bravely, Florence Crannell Means described the cruelty and injustice of the Japanese-American concentration camps through the eyes of two young victims in *The Moved-Outers*—published when the camps were still a reality, in 1945.



By 1947, a separate category of "Books About Other Lands" had appeared in the *Horn Book*'s regular Booklist, as publishers responded to the new demand. Whole series popped up like mushrooms: *The Land and People of* ————, *My Village in* ————, *Pedro Lives In* ————, *The Young Traveler In* ————. I remember the look of them well; in the 1950s, my elementary school library was still full of them. I also remember, unfortunately, how very boring they were, and how all the villages and Pedros seemed the same. I doubt if any children learned from them that other cultures can be truly "other" than, in some ways even preferable to our own; Americanization and "development" are always to be desired in the "Other Lands" of these years.

Also a common Booklist category in the postwar period was "Animal Stories," or "For Pet Lovers," or even specifically "Stories About Horses." These were prime years for the animal story, especially the realistic type in which the animal is not humanized—and most especially stories of horses, cats, and dogs. Walter Farley's "Black Stallion" series, the "Silver Chief, Dog of the North" and "Golden Stallion" series, Colonel Meek's dog stories, *My*