

ures Spiegelman in a critical study of his spouse. In his epilogue, Nel praises "Krauss's literary legacy" and Johnson's "endurance":

Johnson has far better name recognition for two reasons. First, his comic garner[s] much more respect than her poetry. . . . [and second, *Harold and the Purple Crayon*] has sold more than two million copies. (274–75)

Krauss's oeuvre indeed is less accessible, centered on listening and transcribing rather than seeing and inscribing. Her sensitivity to voices, like Johnson's fluent ink line, changes the way we depict children and is difficult to imitate. *Crockett Johnson and Ruth Krauss* tilts toward Johnson's better-documented history, but I left Nel's book captivated by Krauss's quirky brilliance and inventive approaches.

Between the two of them, Krauss and Johnson predicted and crossed paths with every development in children's literature. Where Johnson had excellent connections within the New York art and publishing worlds, and a knack for line art, Krauss had worldly experience and a brilliant ear for here-and-now children's stories. Where Johnson rose to intellectual and political challenges, Krauss took real physical and emotional risks in her bohemian existence. Without Johnson's network, would Krauss have continued her stimulating but unsettled life, never collaborating with Johnson's artist friends Ad Reinhardt and Misha Richter, and never supporting the careers of Sendak, Marc Simont, or Remy Charlip? Without Krauss's creative spark and sensitivity to the sound of language, would Johnson have followed a predictable media career path, albeit one that put him somewhat to the left of other all-American men? Where would young Maurice Sendak have spent his weekends if Krauss and Johnson had not bought a house along the water in Rowayton, Connecticut (178)? Nel's blended biography, full of gems about literary and artistic friendships and feuds, prompts us to ask these questions as we reimagine the artistic ferment of Krauss and Johnson's era.

Randolph Caldecott: The Man Who Could Not Stop Drawing, by Leonard S. Marcus. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013.

Maurice Sendak: A Celebration of the Artist and His Work, edited by Leonard S. Marcus. Curated by Justin G. Schiller and Dennis M. V. David. New York: Abrams, 2013.

Making Mischief: A Maurice Sendak Appreciation, by Gregory Maguire. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.

Reviewed by Jan Susina

Maurice Sendak argued that Randolph Caldecott's work "heralds the beginning of the modern picture book" (*Caldecott & Co.* 21). Sendak's deep admiration for and acknowledgement of Caldecott as one of his chief artistic mentors is well documented in *Caldecott & Co.: Notes on Books & Pictures* (1988), his marvelous collection of articles and interviews. Beatrix Potter was another admirer and careful student of Caldecott's style. Leonard Marcus, in his brief illustrated biography *Randolph Caldecott: The Man Who Could Not Stop Drawing*, mentions that Potter considered Caldecott "one of the greatest illustrators of all," that she had a "jealous appreciation" of her colleague's picture books, and wished that she could draw as well as he did (59). Recognizing the significance of Caldecott to children's book illustrations, the American Library Association called upon his name and reputation when it named its annual award for the most distinguished achievement by an American children's book illustrator. While many readers can easily identify the Caldecott Medal and recognize the status that prestigious award confirms on a book and its illustrator, they may not be familiar with the nineteenth-century British book illustrator for whom it is named.

Marcus has written a richly illustrated biography of Caldecott that, while accessible to adolescent readers, provides a solid introduction for those working in children's literature. While the book is not as scholarly or comprehensive as Marcus's *Margaret Wise Brown: Awakened by the Moon* (1992) or *Minders of Make-Believe: Idealists, Entrepreneurs, and the Shaping of American Children's Literature* (2008)—the winner of Children's Literature Association's book of the year award—*Randolph Caldecott* provides a more effective overview of the illustrator than Rodney Engen's *Randolph Caldecott: Lord of the Nursery* (1988). While it is recognized that children's literature has a dual audience of children and adults, Marcus is one of the few critics in the field who has been able to write

critical studies, such as *Side by Side: Five Favorite Picture-Book Teams Go to Work* (2001) and *A Caldecott Celebration: Six Artists and Their Paths to the Caldecott Medal* (1998), that appeal to both children and adults.

The book features a strong selection of Caldecott's illustrations, including some images from previously unpublished sketchbooks from the British Museum. Marcus gives an insightful historical context for Caldecott's picture books. Caldecott's artwork has been celebrated for its ability to convey movement; Marcus shows that he was part of a Victorian society in which the steam engine was one of the most important inventions of the age. Steam engines not only powered the railroads that transformed England in the nineteenth century; they also ran the printing presses that produced the newspapers, magazines, and picture books that would make Caldecott's reputation. When designing the covers for his picture books, he took into account that they would be sold in railway bookstalls and designed covers that would catch the eye "from the top of an omnibus or out of the passing window of a railway carriage" (50). Having worked as a bank clerk in Manchester, the heart of the British Industrial Revolution, Caldecott understood the Victorian obsession with speed. Marcus astutely connects Joseph Turner's painting, *Rain, Steam, Speed—The Great Western Railway* (1844) to Caldecott's lively illustrations. More compelling is Marcus's comparison of Eadweard Muybridge's famous photographs of a galloping horse with Caldecott's memorable image of the galloping rider from *The Diving History of John Gilpin* (1878), which is reproduced on the Caldecott Medal. As the artistic correspondent for the *Daily Graphic*, Caldecott visited the 1873 World Exposition in Vienna, where he might have seen Muybridge's stop-action photographs as they were being exhibited. Marcus speculates that if Caldecott had lived a generation or two later, he would have moved into animation, given his skills in expressing motion in his drawings. While his picture books embody the Victorian desire for speed and movement, most of them are set in the preindustrial towns and villages of Georgian England. And, while Caldecott died and is buried in the United States, he remains a quintessential British illustrator.

In the world of picture books, Maurice Sendak has become the American Caldecott. *Maurice Sendak: A Celebration of the Artist and His Work*, a big, beautiful anthology edited by Leonard Marcus, served as the catalog of the exhibition at the Society of Illustrators in New York City curated by Justin Schiller and Dennis David in 2013, shortly after Sendak's death. The anthology features twelve essays on Sendak and

his work, written primarily by individuals who knew him well. Sendak once described *In the Night Kitchen* as "a huge, I hope, beautiful garbage pail for memories past and present," adding that the book had much more personal significance for him than the more popular *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak, "Getting to Know"). I couldn't help thinking the same thing about *Maurice Sendak*. As a collection of essays, it is an uneven mess, but a fascinating mess, full of unexpected insights. Unlike Marcus's *Randolph Caldecott*, *Maurice Sendak* isn't intended as an introduction to the artist, or to serve as an overview of his career; rather, it is a kaleidoscope of essays that explore some of the overlooked aspects of that career. While this volume is ideal for those with a deep interest in all things Sendak, it lacks any overarching organization or theme. It is an uneven but frequently brilliant collection, and for a reader already familiar with his career, *Maurice Sendak* is a goldmine of previously unknown information.

Marcus provides the most scholarly essay of the collection, which examines Sendak's famous picture book trilogy—*Where the Wild Things Are*, *In the Night Kitchen*, and *Outside Over There*—and shows how these books established Sendak as a major children's book illustrator. Marcus's essay occasionally overlaps with his *Randolph Caldecott*. In *Maurice Sendak*, he includes an illustration of the 1985 *Horn Book* cover that Sendak designed, featuring a Wild Thing carefully peering over Caldecott's shoulder as the artist sketches. Marcus examines many of Sendak's artistic influences, as does Judy Taylor in her contribution. Taylor became acquainted with Sendak when she worked as an editor at Bodley Head, his British publisher. It is astonishing to learn that by 1966, three years after its US publication, *Wild Things* had not been released in England and had been rejected by eight publishers as "unsaleable" until Bodley Head took a chance on it (30).

Paul Zelinsky, winner of a Caldecott Medal in 1998 for his illustrated edition of *Rapunzel*, recounts that in 1971 as a sophomore at Yale University, he enrolled in a children's literature course team taught by Sendak and Elizabeth Francis, a professor of Victorian literature. Zelinsky remembers Sendak as a teacher who insisted that art for children shouldn't be "treacy or pandering," but as rich and good as art created for adults (216). Sendak encouraged the aspiring writers and artists that "if you're going to steal, steal good" (214). He recommended Caldecott, Samuel Palmer, William Blake, along with James Marshall and Edward Gorey, as models students should emulate. Sendak was a demanding teacher and refused to praise work he didn't like. Sandra

Boynton was another member of the class along with Zelinsky, and Sendak dismissed her drawings as "greeting-card art" (214). In hindsight, this was an accurate though harsh assessment; Boynton would go on to a highly successful career producing cute greeting cards and a series of popular cartoon-like picture books.

Steve Heller, the art director of the *New York Times Book Review*, provides a slightly grumpy critique of Sendak's posters. Heller argues that Sendak was not a poster designer, but managed to create a handful of beautiful posters. The illustrations that accompany Heller's essay seem to run counter to his argument, but Heller has specific criteria for posters and views most of Sendak's as simply large, narrative pictures. It is hard to argue the aesthetics of graphic design with Heller, but the posters that accompany his essay, as well as those that appear in Frank Corsaro's essay on Sendak's involvement in opera, seem accomplished. Since Sendak was a passionate opera lover, it wasn't difficult for Corsaro to convince him to design opera sets and costumes. Sendak initially resisted, complaining that he was stuck in "kiddy-book land," but Corsaro pointed out that opera is nothing more than "the biggest kiddie-book in the world" (134). When Corsaro offered Sendak the opportunity to design for *The Magic Flute*, it was simply an offer that the artist, who idolized Mozart, could not refuse.

The most intriguing essay is by the distinguished antiquarian children's bookseller Justin Schiller, who discusses Sendak as a collector of rare books and art. Through Schiller, Sendak was able to acquire the final letter Mozart wrote to his father, in which he contemplated his death. Sendak's collection of Herman Melville material was considered one of the best in private hands. Schiller also obtained for Sendak hand-colored editions of William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Songs of Experience* (1794). Schiller also served as a seller of Sendak material. He tells the astonishing story of how Sendak, who greatly admired the writing of Isaac Bashevis Singer and illustrated Singer's *Zlateh the Goat and Other Stories* (1966), refused to sell the Nobel Prize winner a drawing that he made for Singer's story "Yash the Chimney-Sweep" that appeared in a magazine. The illustration features a portrait of Sendak's mother, Sadie, who was terminally ill at the time, and his distraught father. Given the intensely personal nature of the image, Sendak was reluctant to sell it to Singer, but the writer insisted he must have it. Sendak refused and so angered Singer that he never spoke to the artist again. Inexplicably, Sendak later agreed to sell the drawing to Schiller who kept it and hung it in his bedroom. Eventually Sendak wanted the

drawing back and lamented ever selling it to Schiller, but after broaching the subject, the two men never spoke of it again. Sendak seems to have been as mysterious and enigmatic as many of his illustrations.

Some of the other essays in *Maurice Sendak*, such as the one examining the artist's involvement in a Bell Atlantic advertising campaign, or another about his creation of a mural in a South Carolina public library, strike me as far less compelling. The section dealing with Sendak's contributions to magazines, which are much less known than his book illustrations, includes a haunting full-page reproduction of "Yash the Chimney-Sweep," and the numerous illustrations of Sendak ephemera from the collection of Joyce Malzberg provide glimpses of his work rarely seen outside of Philadelphia's Rosenbach Museum & Library. It is telling that neither the exhibition nor this impressive catalog has been approved of by the artist's estate. *Maurice Sendak* is an opportunity to view material that has rarely been reproduced and to hear stories from colleagues who knew him intimately. The anthology functions as a beautifully illustrated collection of affectionate remembrances that resemble the stories family members tell one another at wakes, funerals, and *shivahs*, both intensely personal and revealing of the departed.

Gregory Maguire's *Making Mischief: A Maurice Sendak Appreciation* makes a contrasting companion volume to *Maurice Sendak*, although both books have the same purpose: to honor Sendak's career as an artist. But *Making Mischief* is quite different in form; it is a focused single-author study that places Sendak in conversations with both himself and the many other visual artists he admired. The book is based on a slide presentation that Maguire gave at a Sendak symposium held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2003, sponsored by Children's Literature New England, an organization that Maguire cofounded and still serves as codirector. Given the enormous success of Maguire's *Wicked* (1995) and his many other novels, some readers may not know that he was previously a professor and codirector of the Simmons College Center for the Study of Children's Literature. Maguire approaches this volume as a successful children's author, a scholar of children's literature, and a longtime friend of Sendak. It is rare that an academic presentation, especially a slide presentation, is transformed into a book, but this is a show stopper of a performance piece put into print, all the more amazing in that Maguire mentions that Sendak was sitting in the front of the room when he gave it.

Making Mischief is divided into three parts. All three sections are lavishly illustrated with Sendak's art. Section one is a visual overview of

Sendak's oeuvre; it includes brief captions, but the illustrations tell the story. Sendak's illustrations show how he, like all great artists, borrowed and transformed material. Maguire has selected four major themes—flying, reading, children, and monsters—to suggest Sendak's range and use of repetition. Maguire notes that Sendak's books comprise two basic types: the portfolio and the storyboard. It is in the second category, which demands careful pacing and rhythm, that Sendak's picture books were groundbreaking.

The second section is Maguire's personal visual list of Sendak's ten most outstanding illustrations, which appropriately begins and ends with selections from *Where the Wild Things Are*. As a bonus, Maguire includes a drawing Sendak made of Max when the character grew up. Sendak explained that as an adult, Max would be an unmarried Jewish boy, who at the age of seventy-six was still living with his mother (151). In other words, Max looks remarkably like the crotchety Sendak of his later years—dressed in a wolf suit, but walking with a cane.

The final section of *Making Mischief* more than lives up to its title. In the introduction, Maguire writes that he had always hoped that Sendak would illustrate one of his books, but in a clever way he was able to achieve this wish by writing a book about Sendak's art. The final section of *Making Mischief* is the most audacious, in that Maguire retells *Where the Wild Things Are* using Sendak's drawings from various periods of his career. It is a wild rumpus of illustrations, but it works.

Each of these three books uses very different approaches to present the life and work of a major children's book illustrator. Each volume appropriately uses a picture book format, in that the words and the illustrations contribute equally to the understanding of the subject.

Works Cited

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