

Willow patterns from China, Russian *papier maché*, a version of our traditional Cinderella tale and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is accompanied by Chagall's works that were inspired by this play. The artistic activities include sponge painting, silhouette and collage. It urges children to think about the stories they know and new ways of bringing those stories to life through their art. What a bonus for teachers integrating skills across the curriculum!

Both *Portraits* and *Landscapes* follow the same format as the other two books in the series, containing an interesting range of works and artists, and ideas for applying the forms to the works of the child's own creation. They too are illustrated with children's works that were created following the activity instructions. I thoroughly enjoyed examining the children's results. They showed talent and were most effective in supporting the units' activities.

Despite my mild reservations regarding the reading levels and the amount of text, I must recommend these books on the basis of the wonderful multitude of artistic works chosen by the authors. There is hardly a period of art history that is not addressed, and the inclusion of so many cultures and media is commendable. These books would be a valuable addition to any library, and parents and teachers would enjoy trying many of the activities along with their children.

---

---

*Margot Gulliford is an elementary teacher with the Lambton Board of Education in Sarnia, Ontario. She has taught art, music, special education and grades three to six.*

### Innocence and the Extinction of Experience

*Tides of Change; Faces of the Northwest Coast.* Sheryl McFarlane. Illus. Ken Campbell. Orca, 1995. 29 pp. \$15.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55143-1040-1. *A B Sea.* Bobbie Kalman. Crabtree, 1995 (Crabapples). 32 pp. \$20.95 cloth, \$7.95 paper. ISBN 0-86505-625-0, ISBN 0-86505-725-7. *O Is for Orca: A Pacific Northwest Alphabet Book.* Andrea Helman. Photos Art Wolfe. Seattle, Washington: Sasquatch Books, 1995. Unpag. \$19.95 cloth. ISBN 1-57061-038-X.

Children's imaginations are cultivated by experience with biodiversity. It is not necessary to be an environmental psychologist to treasure authentic experience and to conjecture that the artificiality of modern existence may lead to a sense of exclusion from belonging to the order of nature. This makes for an intriguing question: What are the effects of knowing pictures and words rather than the flora and fauna themselves?

Biblical Adam gained the insight to name the animals only after living among them. The innocence shared by Eden and children's consciousness compels participation of imagination in nature's variety. Linguistic richness follows deep engagement with place. In the case of *A B Sea*, however, nature's importance amounts to a mnemonic for knowing the alphabet and expanding vocabulary. In an otherwise lovely book, *A B Sea* destroys the context for its

supposed point of view on the importance of knowing coastal ecosystems because one never learns which of the world's seas it is describing. It never explains the interconnectedness of flora and fauna, nor does it show humans or human created effects on endangered sea creatures. Leaving people completely out of the book results in an absence of narrative and explication of coastal ecosystems. As a result, the book is unmemorable.

*O Is for Orca* adopts a similar bioregional approach and with vibrant, memorable, photographs employs the same mnemonic, alphabet book approach. As in *A B Sea*, the lack of explication concerning ecosystems or the human place within them make for a lacklustre text. As a bioregional guide, it makes the unfortunate and unexplained slight of portraying the Yakima people in an animal book, while couching the reference in terms of their prowess as hunters and fisherman.

*Tides of Change* tells the story of the Northwest Coast with warmth and a sense of history. Sensibly, it begins by recognizing First Nations cultures and their contributions. The biodiversity of the Northwest Coast marine ecosystem ranks as the world's most abundant, and multiple entries cover people's historically changing presence in nature. Nature foregrounds the story of humans and creatures alike. Illustrations are luminous with the lingering light and wind that animate the Northwest Coast. Accomplishing a sumptuous portrait that allows children to learn their place(s) in the natural world, this book dovetails place, history and saga into a landscape that reveals deep meanings.

But botanical guides alone don't build bioregional sensibility and territorial imaginations. A sense of devotion and protection towards fellow creatures and their habitats grows by knowing how these are interwoven. Young children need little convincing of the relatedness of all things, and these books could all have made stronger and more inventive use of that insight without prohibitively complex vocabulary. Any attempt to embellish and enrich bioregional vocabulary without revealing the dangers facing these places turns the world the words represent into little more than a series of pretty pictures. Yet it is just as important for children to know how untreated sewage in Victoria, BC, is connected to the bloated death throes of a beached grey whale. While debates roll on about the morality of endangering children's innocence with these horrors, grooming their imaginations with pictures that neglect this reality offers them a fantasy that may seem more real than these sentient creatures themselves. The books share the shortcoming of picturing nature as something "out there" rather than as integrated into an ecology of which they are members. While *A B Sea* and *O is for Orca* can assist children in naming the creatures and vegetation that live in the dark and giant waters, only *Tides of Change* is equipped to increase their understanding.

---

---

*Joe Sheridan is an assistant professor of Education and Environmental Studies at York University.*