Summer 8-1997

Stories for Grown ups: The Works of Dr. Seuss

Ashley Lyn Henson
University of Tennessee - Knoxville

Follow this and additional works at: https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj

Recommended Citation
https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/221

This is brought to you for free and open access by the Supervised Undergraduate Student Research and Creative Work at TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Chancellor's Honors Program Projects by an authorized administrator of TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.
UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL

Name: Ashley Henson

College: Arts and Sciences

Department: English

Faculty Mentor: Richard Kelly

PROJECT TITLE: Stories for Grownups: The Works of Dr. Seuss

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: Richard Kelly, Faculty Mentor

Date: Aug 7, 1997

Comments (Optional):

Author's work is original, well-written, and, defying genre, quite entertaining as well as informative. Richard Kelly
Stories for Grownups:
The Works of

Dr. Seuss

Ashley Henson
To Dr. Seuss

Theodore Geisel, friend of my youth,  
provider of wisdom, laughter and truth

Yertle the Turtle, the Cat in the Hat 
The Grinch and the Lorax and creatures like that

all taught me lessons I'll never forget 
and I thank the good doc I ain't forgotten them yet

Strangely named felines and odd colored fishes 
If I ran the circus and other fun wishes

they led me to wonder about what I would be 
when I got much older like a hundred and three

Would I ever like Green Eggs and Ham? 
Would I ever dislike that Sam I Am?

I found that the world was a funnier place 
And his stories put many a smile on my face

And now I'm grown up and have kids of my own 
and I read the good doc when I have them at home

and pass on the lessons I learned at his knee 
though I'm not that much older just thirty and three.

Larry Blankenship

"'Tut, tut, child!' said the Duchess. 'Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it.!'" 
Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland
Table of Contents

Frontispiece.................................................................................................................................................. i
Introduction....................................................................................................................................................... 1
Imagination....................................................................................................................................................... 4

And to Think
That I Saw It on
MULBERRY STREET

Imagination (and to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street).......................................................... 5

Figures Section 1............................................................................................................................................... 10
Self-examination and Self-actualization.................................................................................................... 12

Oh, the Places You'll Go!

Self-examination and Self-actualization................................................................. 12

Figures Section 2............................................................................................................................................... 16
Figures Section 4

Conclusion

Appendices

Books in Print

Photo Gallery

Time Line

Political Cartoons And Ads By Doctor Seuss

Works Cited
Introduction

Theodore Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss, has had an enormous impact on generations of children. It is unusual that such an iconoclast in children’s literature has such staying power. Why has Dr. Seuss had such an impact on so many generations? Numerous critics point to the universal appeal of his work and the ambiguity of the intended audience. Geisel himself was often unsure of whether or not his books were intended for children. A huge amount of attention has been heaped upon these books. Literary critics of every approach, from biographical critics to psychological critics to feminist and gender critics, have examined the work of Dr. Seuss. The Internet is crammed with Dr. Seuss parodies, tribute pages, and merchandising. Dr. Seuss has become more a part of popular culture than ever. Thousands of children and adults watch How the Grinch Stole Christmas every year, a Christmas tradition which is practiced in my home among many others. The Cat in the Hat graces bumper stickers on cars, as does Sam-I-Am. The appeal is undeniable.

In the field of children’s literature, there is always a division between the intended audience of the book and the consumer of the written product. Julia Briggs discusses this phenomenon: “One major complication is the legislative role of adults in the whole process, both as producers and consumers. Children’s books are written for a special readership but not, normally, by members of that readership; both the writing and, quite often, the buying of them, is carried out by adult non-members on behalf of child members. Inevitably the production of children’s books is governed by what adults want children to be and to do, and furthermore it offers an opportunity to induce them to share those adult goals” (5). Thus, children’s writers have basically two choices in order to sell books. First, the writing can be didactic, setting forth messages approved by parents. This works well, but this type of writing does not tend to perpetuate itself. Subsequent generations of parents raised on dry, didactic material are less
likely to subject their own children to these works. Another choice is to create a literature that appeals to adults as well as to children, literature that speaks to adults. This is the approach that Seuss, as well as many other modern children’s writers, has taken. The writer combines the children’s genre with humor and themes that appeal to a wider audience.

If Geisel wrote for both children and adults, then, what were some of the messages which adults can glean from the works? Geisel frequently placed intentional messages within his texts. Geisel was a veteran of W.W.II and worked with Frank Capra in the Signal Corps, producing training films and propaganda films for the army. (See appendix 3.) Geisel’s background in the field of propaganda, then, was quite extensive. Several of his books, notably *The Lorax* and *The Butter Battle Book*, are commonly called the “message books.” The Horton books deal particularly with the issue of human rights. Geisel (who will be called by his pseudonym Seuss throughout the remainder of the text) placed within his books issues which were of importance to him. Some concerns are traceable throughout his life, such as his concern for the environment and his fear of nuclear annihilation. Many of his books reveal a deep understanding of the psyche of a child and the relationship between a child and his parents. The Beginner Books, placed in a separate section because of the nature of the Beginner Book project, reflect this understanding, an understanding which can remind parents of what it is to be a child and, at times, allows parents to see mistakes that they might be making with their own children. This deep understanding is a drawing point for many parents, who can reclaim parts of childhood through sharing these books with their children. Seuss examines the power of childlike imagination in many of the so-called “big books,” a term which refers not only to the larger size of the books but of the higher reading level than the Beginner Books. Seuss’s first book, *And to Think that I Saw it on Mulberry Street* and the later *McElligot’s Pool* exhibit this theme, which is so prevalent in Seuss’s work.

Self-actualization is another theme of Dr. Seuss’s work, particularly the ever-popular *Oh, the Places You’ll Go*, a book which has had a recent resurgence of popularity as a graduation gift. This popularity indicates a universality of the subject matter of the book, which traces life throughout the developmental years, years in which one grows and moves ever closer to the ultimate goal of self-actualization. Hints of this theme are present in other of the texts. In most
of these texts, the child’s worth and ability are upheld and the road to self-actualization is visible for the protagonists.

Dr. Seuss’s death put an end to the original creative spirit which produced books which have entered into the collective consciousness of generations of young readers. He left behind several manuscripts which are being published by his widow, Audrey. One of these works, *My Many Colored Days*, is examined here. This book is discussed along with the self-actualization books because of its similar thematic content. *My Many Colored Days* was illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher. Seuss wanted this book to be illustrated by someone whose artistic style was much different from his own. Audrey Geisel picked the artists rather than Seuss, however, and because of this, it is important to remember that Seuss did not make all of the decisions regarding the book.

The importance of examining the work of Dr. Seuss, although a serious academic study of his work sounds campy, is undeniable. Seuss has been and continues to be an important influence on popular culture. The appeal of Seuss is an unusual phenomenon and continues on, as children raised on Seuss grow and mature to read these books to their own children. Millions of books have been sold, including translations into eighteen languages. These are books which will live on for generations to come, books which are often compared to the works of Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear, books which teach both children and adults. As critic Julia Briggs says, “We seldom know what given individuals thought about their childhood reading but we may be sure that it helped to determine their subsequent imaginative life” (2). Seuss has helped determine the imaginative lives of generations of Americans and has thus become a part of our cultural identity.
The theme of powerful imagination is the most prevalent and obvious theme present in the works of Dr. Seuss. Frequently, these works focus on the relationship between a child and the parent figure. The child worries that if s/he is honest about the nature of the imagination that they will be rejected by the parent figure. The appeal of this theme to adult readers is manifold. Some critics believe that these books appeal to adults as a reminder of a time in which there were ultimate rights and wrongs, a time in which right and wrong were as distinct as black and white. “There is a simplicity in this approach that appeals strongly in early adolescence, when one longs for the external world to perform a similar trick and evolve itself once more into the clear-cut two-dimensional morality of childhood. I once assumed that it was the moral simplification that drew adult readers back to reread childhood favorites when they are feeling tired or ill, but there could be other explanations, and the mere pleasure of reliving childhood experiences plays some part: children’s fiction offers a retreat into an ideal world, a world of pastoral, where the intolerable logics of duty and possibility do not exactly die, but are at least temporarily suspended” (Briggs 12). These ideas have something to do with the appeal of Seuss’s work to adult readers, but the fantastic nature of the books suggests not a retreat but an escape. The adult remembers the imaginary worlds to which s/he retreated as a child and is thus able to revisit them.

Tim Wolf has done extensive work with this particular theme, although his interpretation involves more the act of reading itself, a sort of metafiction turned on its ear. Wolf points out a pattern in these texts: “[These books] feature three elements -- a rejected child, the exercise of
childlike imagination, and a rejecting parent whose anger seems focused against the exercise of childlike imagination. The clever whimsical verse and exuberant illustration form a powerful tension with the potentially painful portrait of a child who wants to win the approval of a rejecting parent, and fails. Apparently this problem mattered deeply to Seuss...” (Wolf 137).

Seuss, in other words, writes about the conflict between the hegemony of adults and the view of children. This can serve educational purposes for the sensitive parental reader who may realize that children cannot be held to the same societal standard that they themselves are. Parents in these works often attempt to force these restrictions on their children.

The first of these books (the first book written by Seuss) is *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*. In the book, the conflict is between Marco and his father, who wants Marco to “‘...keep your eyelids up / And see what you can see.’” Yet Marco has a very different definition of seeing than does his father. Marco sees not only with his eyes but with his imagination, an imagination which works very logically, beginning with a small detail and gradually adding until the picture is quite outlandish. Marco’s father scolds him for having eyesight that is “‘...much too keen. Stop telling such outlandish tales. / Stop turning minnows into whales’” (*Mulberry* 13). Marco himself seems to be unsure of the division between what is actually seen and what has been imagined, referring to “what I think I’ve seen” (*Mulberry* 13). Marco is trying to learn this division, a distinction made primarily by adults. He wants to please his father, wondering what he can say and what he cannot. Marco indeed tries to do what his father wants. He looks carefully at everything, seeming to search for the literal, as is his father’s manner. Marco “looked and...looked / And...kept careful track” as his father wants him to do, but sees nothing that would make his father happy, simply a horse and wagon and his own feet. These are not things which would get him praised by his father for his power of observation, so he begins to utilize his imagination in the search for acceptance by his father. The artwork on this page is telling as well. There is an adult driving the horse and buggy, but his eyes are closed. He goes about his business, but there is no real seeing as a child would see. (See figure 1.1.) This is indescribably dull to the child, and he begins to change the details of the picture to make it more noteworthy. Marco begins a search for “a story that no one can beat” that will bring him accolades from his father. He replaces the horse with a zebra, much like a horse, but more exotic. There is a definite logical progression to the imaginary picture that Marco dreams. The
man in the picture smiles as well, indicating the pleasure that both the adult and the child receive pleasure from the imagination. As Marco changes more details, the man begins to smile and look happy, opening his eyes and driving his ever-morphing buggy faster and faster. This may be a reflection of the response that Marco wants to elicit from his father by telling him an outlandish story.

Perry Nodelman, as quoted by Tim Wolf, comments upon the composition of the illustrations: “As the boy, Marco, adds details to his complex story of what he saw on Mulberry Street, the pictures become more and more complex, more and more filled with detail -- but always in terms of the same basic compositional patterns: the elephant is always in the same place on each spread, and so on. So the pictures build in intensity and maintain their narrative connection with each other, as the words in a story usually do; in each picture we look for new information to add to old, rather than having to start from scratch about what we are seeing each time, as usually happens in picture books...The result is a curious reversal, in which...[the] pictures strain toward the narrative qualities of text” (Wolf 141). This careful arrangement of artwork allows for a visual, logical representation of what is happening in Marco’s head. He is struggling to act within the hegemony by organizing his thoughts within an acceptable sequence. Indeed, Marco is constantly struggling with issues of authority, wanting to beat all other stories and constantly trying to make the picture seem more logical, changing the buggy to a sleigh because “A reindeer hates the way it feels / To pull a thing that runs on wheels” (Mulberry 22). At this point in the text as well, the adult in the picture (which resembles the type of man that Marco’s father is) becomes two children. The adults added to the pictures are from then on symbols of authority -- a rajah, a brass band to celebrate the imagination of Marco, a supportive father figure to be in the audience, adding eventually policemen and even the mayor to support Marco’s ideas. (See figure 1.2.) Marco certainly has a grasp on the idea that societal approval is important, but he still wants to remain in the world of the child. He is elated at the imaginary parade which he authors himself, a parade which takes place in part on Bliss Street; he knows of the joy of the imagination, running up the stairs, his feet not touching the ground, but once again, his father squelches the joy that Marco feels by nearly accusing him of being dull when Marco pauses to gather his thoughts: “Dad looked at me sharply and pulled at his chin. / He frowned at me sternly from there in his seat, / ‘Was there nothing to look at...no people to greet? / Did
nothing excite you or make your heart beat?" The father here sends mixed messages to the child, wanting him to tell him something even if he has seen nothing. To see nothing is to be dull, but to tell him an imaginary tale is to be a dreamer. Marco is disappointed by the sharpness of his father's response and is forced to act within the hegemonic idea of reality. The joy of his imaginary endeavors is thwarted by his disapproving parent. The story seems to have taken a tragic turn.

The conflict between the parent and the child becomes more central to an older reader. The wonder of the imagination is de-emphasized and the struggle of the child to please the rejecting parent becomes more the issue. Marco’s struggle to fit into the adult world and to relate to his father on his terms becomes central. The child is forced to give up the joy that his imagination gives him in order to please his father; his lack of enthusiasm for this loss results in his near rejection by his father in spite of Marco’s conformity to his ideals. Marco’s face turns red, indicating embarrassment, failure, inadequacy, and frustration. There appears to be nothing that Marco can do to please his father except lie about his internal life. The sadness of this loss of childlike innocence strikes the older reader, as does the forcing of the child to fit into the adult world. Seuss seems to be subtly criticizing the parenting skills of the father, a criticism to which the adult reader would be sensitive.

The later McElligot’s Pool has a different approach to the problem of the devalument of childlike imagination. In this book, Seuss upholds the childish imagination against the critical voice of the adult figure. The story opens with a skeptical farmer, the adult figure, making fun of the young angler fishing in a tiny pool: ‘‘Young man,’ laughed the farmer, ‘You’re sort of a fool! / You’ll never catch fish / In McElligot’s Pool’’ (McElligot 1). The young angler, again named Marco, stands up to the doubting farmer and upholds the product of his imagination. The farmer here is not a parental figure; therefore there is no fear of rejection on the part of Marco. The thematic concerns are therefore different. There is not the clouding concern of familial relationships that is present in Mulberry Street. The story is instead about the differences between the world of the adult and the world of the child. In the world of the child, anything is possible, including the presence of huge amounts of fish in a pool that seems dead. Marco in this book does not lamely submit to the ideas of the adult hegemony as he does in Mulberry Street. He acknowledges the possibility that the adult figure could be right, but he does not worry about
the social ramifications of disagreeing with him: "'Hmmm...' answered Marco, / 'It may be you're right. / I've been here three hours / Without one single bite. / There might be no fish... / But, again, / Well, there might! / 'Cause you never can tell / What goes on down below! / This pool might be bigger / Than you or I know!'" (McElligot 3-4). This is a child that knows the differences between the adult world and idea of truth and the childlike view of the world and of truth. Interestingly, the child cites books, usually the realm of adults, as support for the imaginary depth of the pool: “This MIGHT be a pool, like I’ve read of in books, / Connected to one of those underground brooks!” (McElligot 5). The child looks to adult means to support his own theory to an adult. Thus, Marco hooks the adult, getting him to listen to his theory. He acknowledges the polluted nature of the pool which the farmer alludes to in his opening banter with the child. The artwork ultimately represents Marco’s view of the pool, and the trash is always there at the bottom of the pool. (See figure 1.3) The further out, however, the more pristine the pool becomes. The underground brook at all times runs underneath a world that is filled with realistic activity and detail which lends more and more credibility to the picture which Marco paints for the farmer. Marco opens the brook up to the sea to lure more fish to the pool. Once Marco brings the possibility of fish into view, then the real work of his imagination begins. The different kinds vary, at first, simply in size. Marco combines fish with other animals. He does not confine himself to the linear organization of the imagination as he does in Mulberry Street. This Marco represents a child secure in his world, sure that he will not be rejected from it because he upholds his own childlike views. The artwork underlines this security. Marco’s imaginings are portrayed in color, while the “real” world of the farmer is portrayed in black and white. (Note this in figures 1.3 and 1.4.) He does acknowledge the possibility that he is not portraying reality accurately: “One doesn’t catch this kind of a fish as a rule, / But the chances are fine in McElligot’s Pool!” (McElligot 24). However, he also questions the adult idea of reality. For example, he questions the idea that whales are the largest animal in the sea: “'Cause there’s nothing that’s bigger / Than whales, so they say. / Still, of course, / It might be... / that there IS something bigger! / Some sort of a kind of / A THING-A-MA-JIGGER!! / A fish that’s so big, if you know what I mean, / That he makes a whale look like a tiny sardine!” (McElligot 44-46). The arguments of the child begin to persuade the farmer, as evidenced by the expression on the face of the farmer at the end of the book. (See figure 1.4) The concluding words of Marco
reveal even further the belief in the authority of his own words: “And that’s why I think / That I’m not such a fool / When I sit here and fish / In McElligot’s Pool!” (McElligot 50).

For an adult, McElligot’s Pool is somewhat of an admonition of the adult who does not understand the world and mind of a child. In the book, Seuss reminds adults that they do not have all of the answers and that a child can sometimes understand more than an adult. Seuss once again validates the mind of a child, a child who can look at the pool and see beyond the pollution and grime and look at the possible source of the pool and the possibilities within it. Adults reading the book find themselves in the position of the farmer who once called Marco a fool -- gazing into the pool with the eyes of a child.
The Imagination of a Child: Figures Section 1

1.1 Mulberry Street
p. 15

1.2 Mulberry Street
p. 38
1.3 McElligot’s Pool
p. 6

1.4 McElligot’s Pool
p. 52
Dr. Seuss deals with even more complicated issues than the power of the child’s imagination. In several of his books, notably *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* and *My Many Colored Days*, Seuss deals with the ideas of self-actualization and the importance of self-examination. These are important issues for the developing child as well as for the adult who may forget the importance of each of these concepts for short periods of time. These books appeal to the adult audience largely because of life issues faced as a young adult and periodically throughout adulthood -- the loss of direction and the loss of identity.

*Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* has enjoyed a resurgence of popularity in the last few years. There is something in the simple theme of self-actualization that appeals to a mass audience. At my orientation session as a freshman, the book was made central to a skit about the importance of this point in our lives. Parents want to instill in their children, the lesson that they can do whatever they can dream. This is a message that appeals to young people starting out in life, to children starting school, to adults who have lost their way. It is no wonder that the book has become even more popular in the last few years, even being packaged in a special gift set intended as a graduation present.

The style of the book may have a great deal to do with its popular success. The book is based on a series of clichés and the stock metaphor of life as a journey. Seuss uses this metaphor and allows himself to make this cliché literal in the artwork, placing the nameless, sexless protagonist in the midst of a literal journey over myriad intersecting roads. (See figure 2.1.) The opening of the book is the departure of the protagonist on the journey: “Congratulations! / Today is your day. / You’re off to Great Places! / You’re off and away!” (*Places* 1). The metaphor continues throughout the text, as Seuss describes various modes of transportation, beginning with walking and then moving to a balloon, embodying the cliché of “soaring to great heights.” (See
The balloon transportation becomes a race, with the protagonist “passing all the rest.” The balloon “hits a snag,” catching on a tree as all of the others pass. Seuss also draws a “slump” for the reader, pictorially representing the cliché that all of us have heard. This lack of progress is represented by the dark and a confusing landscape with indefinite shapes. (See figure 2.3.) Once out of the slump, there is a question of where one should go, a “loss of direction,” as it were. Again, Seuss draws this cliché for us by representing this period of life as a city with confusing unnamed streets. The nature of life is not romanticized in the book, a probable explanation of why the book has been so popular. The phrase “hurry up and wait,” a phrase which I heard sighed out of my father’s lips at many frustrating points throughout his life, is represented by this Seussian stage. The “waiting stage” follows this period of breakneck racing. People “wait in line” for promotions, for the phone, for transportation, or someone to guide their lives: “Waiting for the fish to bite / or waiting for wind to fly a kite / or waiting around for Friday night / or waiting, perhaps, for their Uncle / or a pot to boil, or a Better Break / or a string of pearls, or a pair of pants / or a wig with curls, or Another Chance. / Everyone is just waiting” (Places 25). Seuss sees the key to success as constant movement: “Somehow you’ll escape / all that waiting and staying. / You’ll see the bright places / where Boom Bands are playing” (Places 26). The cliché “riding high” is also pictured, with the protagonist riding an elephant. (See figure 2.4.) Seuss also tackles the goals of many people’s lives -- fame and fortune: “There are points to be scored. There are games to be won. / And the magical things you can do with that ball / will make you the winning-est winner of all. / Fame! You’ll be famous as famous can be, / with the whole wide world watching you win on TV” (Places 31). Seuss takes this overused goal and shows how it can backfire, leaving one alone with nothing and no one, taking the metaphor of athletic success and showing another side: “I’m afraid that some times/ you’ll play lonely games too. / Games you can’t win / ’cause you’ll play against you” (Places 33). Seuss is careful to show the other side of success, the times of life in which there is failure and loneliness. He shows the frightening aspect of life as a set of monsters, the Hakken-Kraks. The cliché “up a creek” is used for this aspect of life, the frightening way that control can be lost: “On you will go / though the Hakken-Kraks howl. / Onward up many / a frightening creek, / though your arms may get sore / and your sneakers may leak” (Places 34). The protagonist comes through these trials and “faces his problems” quite literally. (See figure 2.5.) The final, most powerful cliché
made literal is the picture in which the child “moves mountains.” (See figure 2.6.) Seuss also acknowledges the possibility that life can result in failure: “And will you succeed? / Yes! You will, indeed! / (98 and 3/4 percent guaranteed.)” (Places 42). The enclosure of this number which is slightly less than one hundred percent acknowledges this possibility of the fact that there are some who do not succeed.

The appeal of this book for adult readers is clear. The early adult years (the time in which one is most likely to receive this book as a gift) are a confusing time. Seuss accomplishes several things within the covers of this book. He examines the use of language, re-examining clichéd terms and finding new truth in them. There is also a simple plan for the life of an adult. Seuss seems to tell us all to do the best we can. We are not to be too hard on ourselves if we fail; we are to simply keep moving.

*My Many Colored Days* is a relatively new Dr. Seuss book, published after Seuss’s death. The focus of this book is on self-examination and understanding behavioral motivation. There are times in which we forget that emotions fuel our behavior and alter our outlook on life. Seuss reminds us of this phenomenon in a relatively simple book. Seuss assigns a color to each of several moods. Another artist, more able to work in color block methods, was to do the artwork. Seuss felt that his artwork did not properly accompany the message of his text. The result is a beautiful book that reminds many readers of the basic truth -- that everything looks different depending on the color lenses through which one looks. Some of the colors used to represent moods recall clichés. Here again, Seuss looks to the language itself to find answers to some of life’s questions. Black, for example, represents anger, a typical association. Seuss also uses an animal to reinforce the image that he creates. For instance, on black days, a wolf is used to further represent anger. (See figure 2.7.) This is also a traditional symbol, existing in fairy tales and other folk tales. Seuss presents the possibility of being drastically different on different days. The power of emotion is evident throughout this book; Seuss changes days and allows the personality to change as a result. For instance, on a blue day, a person is happy and therefore virtually morphs into a bird, an image which supports the cliché of “soaring spirits” and “flying like a bird,” although it breaks with the traditional color symbolism of the color blue, which usually represents sadness. Seuss outlines ten different days for the reader in this way,
sometimes keeping with traditional symbolism and other time creating his own. Seuss also includes the possibility of having days in which no one emotion rules.

By imaging emotions in this way, Seuss separates the concept of “me” from any ruling emotion. It is not the person that feels angry, it is the wolf inside. Seuss concludes with deceptively innocent, simple words: “But it all turns out all right, you see. And I go back to being...me” (Days 27-28). What this says to the reader is that there is no one emotion which can characterize a person. There is no defining standard which can clearly illustrate a personality for us. There is a continuum of emotion along which a person can occupy many different spaces. This is a useful lesson in the adult world, where it is tempting to define a person as a “happy person” or an “angry person” (to use the nicest term possible for people who have many black days). Seuss is teaching children and adults to see in multiple dimensions, to see that one person can feel many different ways and can seem and be any number of things. He believes that there is one ultimate identity, the idea of “me,” but that “me” can be covered up by a number of emotions which cause a person to act in a number of different ways.
Self-Actualization and Self-Examination: Figures Section 2

2.1 Oh, the Places You'll Go
front cover

2.2 Oh, the Places You'll Go!
p. 12
2.3 Oh, the Places You’ll Go!

p. 18

2.4 Oh, the Places You’ll Go!

p. 28
2.5 Oh, the Places You'll Go!

p. 43
2.6 *My Many Colored Days*

p. 24
The message books are a category easily seen as aimed at adult readers. These books have complex subject matter, more complex than a child would fully comprehend. I will look at the three most famous message books: *Horton Hears a Who!*, *The Lorax*, and *The Butter Battle Book*. These books all contain subject matter that was important to Seuss throughout his life. *Horton*, for example, is primarily about civil rights, advocating the rights of the Whos, a small group of people who are not easily seen by those insensitive to the cries of others. *The Lorax* is about environmental concerns. *The Butter Battle Book*, one of Seuss’s most important books, is about the possibility of full-scale nuclear war growing out of the Cold War. These books contain messages that are obviously aimed at the adults who read the stories out loud to their children. The placement of these heavy messages into children’s books also provides an important reminder to adults. These are issues with which their innocent children will have to deal if they are not taken care of by the adults who care for them. The juxtaposition is harsh, but useful in this way.

*Horton Hears a Who!* is about the importance of civil rights and the equality of all human beings. Seuss places these concerns in a tale that seems almost like a beast fable. The book opens in the middle of the month, in the middle of the day, in the jungle, a place located primarily near the equator, therefore in the middle of the world. This emphasis on “middleness” reminds one of middle America, a place where prejudice is extreme and paradoxically subtle. There is a baptism-like scene (See figure 3.1.) which suggests a birth of Horton into experience, which certainly proves to be the case by the end of the book. Horton hears the sound of the Whos for the first time, and continues to investigate, instead of turning away from something so
incredibly insignificant. He hears what others do not, and he sees the small speck of dust that is the world of the Whos. This is a remarkable achievement, and very few others see what he sees. He makes a leap of faith to judge that there is a small world on top of the speck of dust. The moral is introduced on the subsequent pages: “A person’s a person, no matter how small” (Horton 6). This moral is the heart of the humanistic push toward universal rights. The creature pictured is very different from Horton, yet he wants to protect him and comfort him in his time of fear. Horton takes great care of the duck speck, giving it refuge in a clover. Horton’s attitude is illustrated on his face. (See figure 3.2.) He is innocent of the trials that he will have to endure on behalf of these people. He simply seems happy to do the favor for these small creatures. This elephant becomes an odd symbol for the human rights movement.

However, the nobility of Horton’s motives is put to the test time and time again. Seuss is careful to show that it is not easy to stand up for other groups, especially those groups who are not given authority by society, those groups outside the hegemony. The first to express scorn for Horton and his dust speck are a kangaroo and her joey. These animals are a disturbing symbol for a parent. The child mirrors the adult in everything, being carried with the mother wherever she goes, and therefore seeing and hearing everything that she does and copying exactly the things that she does. (See figure 3.3.) The kangaroos also represent family, the basic unit of society. Seuss seems to be saying that prejudice begins in the family. For after the kangaroos scoff at Horton, he tries to relate to them by discussing the families of the Whos. However, this does not work, and the kangaroos take what is the closest thing to a violent act in the works of Dr. Seuss. They plunge into the water, splashing the clover carelessly, showing their lack of respect for the tiny lives on the clover. Horton leaves them, but his trials are not over.

As he travels with the dust speck, the word spreads, much as the reputation of a “nigger lover” would have spread earlier in this century. He considers giving up his protective role, but continues on. Here there are also parallels to early Christianity. The clover can be seen as a symbol of faith that Horton tries to protect. There is persecution of a baptized Christian (we must not forget the opening of the book), defiling of a holy place (the plunge of the kangaroos into the place where Horton was baptized). There is divine interaction. Small creatures speak to him, his faith grows. Horton continues to believe in his cause. He is seen as crazy by the monkeys (creatures who are often synonymous with the primitive), who grab this near holy relic,
attacking the group of people whom Horton is protecting, thus challenging his ideas. An eagle (with an obviously Russian-sounding name -- Vlad Vlad-i-koff, perhaps suggesting the suppression of ideas practiced in Communist countries) carries away the clover. The eagle is traditionally thought of as a symbol of democracy, but the bald eagle, our country’s symbol, is white headed. This is a black-bottomed eagle, the opposite of democracy, a political comment that children might not understand.

Horton’s torment has begun. He is made to travel over rocky terrain. This occurs at night, a time which historically has been a time in which horrible acts of persecution have taken place. Horton keeps his mind on the object of his faith and continues to peruse the bird. The bird drops the clover into a field of other clovers, a place where Horton has a very slim chance of finding it: “He let that small clover drop somewhere inside / Of a great patch of clovers a hundred miles wide!” (Horton 28). The time of this act, one of historical importance to any future followers of the faith which Horton possesses, is recorded carefully, 6:56 in the morning. Horton’s faith and determination is thus challenged. The field of clovers can be thought of as a huge number of false faiths or distractions which tempt Horton away from his path. They also represent the ultimate test of determination. Horton looks carefully for his new friends. It is his faith and determination which allow him to find them again. The picture which accompanies their discovery shows Horton a renewed “man.” (See figures 3.4.a and 3.4.b.) His concern for himself has disappeared, and he thinks only of his friends. The damage of the town is illustrated carefully in both words and picture. There are striking similarities to humans shown in the picture. The Whos use umbrellas, brooms, bicycles, saws. This allows readers to place themselves in the position of the Whos.

The punishment that Horton receives is to be put out of society, tried for heresy, as it were. The leaders of the mob which come to punish Horton are the kangaroos, the family. Here, too, it is disturbing to see the mirroring of the mother by the child. The monkeys in the background of the picture carry rope, reminiscent of the lynchings during the Civil Rights Movement and before. The kangaroos have their eyes closed. They are symbolically blind to the truth and to the reality that Horton has found. They threaten to put Horton in prison in the name of preserving peace. They also are going to kill the entire town of Whos by boiling the clover in oil. This is genocide, as this is an entire race of people who are wiped out by the hatred
of another group. The Whos must show that they are indeed as real as their would-be killers. This requires the cooperation of the entire village. However, one Who is found shirking his duties, a young Who who perhaps doesn’t realize his importance to society. This may also be a criticism of society by Seuss. Children should know about “political” and “social” matters, because they can be the ones that save us, that do the right thing, as the “smallest of all” saves the village of Whos.

The resolution of the tale, then, represents a kind of ideal world, where all creatures are united. The kangaroo mother finally puts forth a positive image for her child. There is a sad criticism of the numbers game, in which the number of people who express a faith must be high for it to be heard. This casts a pall over the otherwise happy ending. The words of the kangaroo child end the book with the promise that future generations will not repeat the mistakes of the former.

*The Lorax* is very different in aim. The focus here is on the damage that the adult world has done and is doing on the world around them. This book is simultaneously an urging of the child to not repeat the mistakes of the former generations and an indictment of the adult reader. Seuss represents the death of an entire ecosystem, much in the way that such things happen, in a specific sequence.

The approach of the book is what will appeal to the adult reader. Seuss places the story within a frame, a frame in which the damage has already been done. The Once-ler has done horrible damage. He lives alone, in a devastated area, compelled (much as the ancient mariner) to tell the story again and again to anyone who gives him trinkets. This exchange underscores the mercenary nature of the Once-ler, and by extension, the adult realm. The area is full of Grickle-grass, a word which sounds unpleasant, remarkably like “prickle” and “thistle,” a plant which is able to grow in areas in which little else will. The wind is “slow-and-sour,” lacking any kind of refreshing quality. There are only crows singing, birds which are also known for their hardiness. The accompanying illustration shows this devastation, with ominous clouds, dirty gray houses, scraggly grass, a sad looking bird. The only color here is the street sign. (See figure 3.5.)

The main characters are introduced in the first few pages of the story as are the main concepts to be discussed throughout the text. The Lorax is introduced on the first page of text.
There is an implication that “somebody lifted the Lorax away” (Lorax 286). There is a controlling force, then, to the environment, a force that no one understands. This may be a religious reference or it may refer to controlling laws of nature. The Once-ler’s name is the first information presented about the character. “Once” implies past, a single opportunity at protecting the environment. He is the only one who lives in the area; he is the only one that knows the story, having to live with it day in and day out. The name of the Once-ler’s lair is Lerkim, a word that sounds like “lurk.” The Once-ler remains inside, seeing nothing, remaining cold. The facts presented about the Once-ler sound like typical conservation measures taken to an extreme. He is cold, perhaps trying to conserve fossil fuels or prevent further pollution from entering the air. He makes his own clothes, perhaps not wanting to participate further in the consumer culture of which he was a part for so long, a culture which was the cause of the devastation that surrounds him. However, the final interpretation may be stretched, because the Once-ler asks for payment to hear the story of the Lorax. However, in recent years, conservation measures themselves have begun to participate in the consumer culture. Conservation has, in some cases, become an industry.

The Once-ler seems pathetic in these opening pages. His house is ramshackle, and the payment he requires for telling the story is fifteen cents, a nail, and a snail shell. The small amount of money may indicate that he is desperate for money or that he has been in his Lerkim for so long that he does not know how little money fifteen cents is (the book was written in 1971). The nail may be for repairs to the Lerkim, the snail shell a reminder that there is still life somewhere, although the fact that he wants only the shell indicates that he does not quite understand how to appreciate nature without controlling it. He owns a plant, a cactus, the ultimate in hardy plants. This is a plant that grows naturally in the desert. This says a great deal about the extent of the damage to the area.

The negative aspects of the Once-ler begin to come out after the opening exposition. He is greedy, counting the money carefully before he will tell the story. This indicates that he is, after all, telling the story not for the education of the boy, but solely for money. He hides his payment as if someone would take it away from him. He is probably used to loss, given the horrible area in which he lives, an area which has lost all of its life. The reader finds out later in the text that he has also lost his business and his money. The Once-ler embodies the damage to
the local ecosystem. His voice has been affected, and he “sounds as if he had smallish bees up his nose” \((\text{Lorax 294})\). His “teeth sound gray,” adding to this picture of decay. The Once-ler begins his tale: “A long time back...” This damage took a long time to happen.

The frame then disappears, and with the turn of a page, the “grass was still green, and the pond was still wet and the clouds were still clean.” \((\text{See figure 3.6.})\) The breeze is fresh again, and the Truffula trees grow all around. The crows disappear, and the Swomee-Swans bathe in the pond. More animals are introduced in subsequent pages: Brown Bar-ba-loots and Humming-fish. The Bar-ba-loots eat the Truffula fruit, indicating overtly the relationship between members of the ecosystem. The pond is “rippulous,” reminding one of a pond full of fish and air as well. This is also a reminder of the interconnectedness of each aspect of an ecosystem.

The Once-ler sees the beauty of the place, but sees it in a mercenary way. The animals watch as he destroys his first Truffula tree and makes a thing from it, a thing that is unrecognizable to the reader in order to heighten the unnecessary nature of the destruction. Seuss leaves no defense open for the Once-ler. The Bird seems startled, the Bar-ba-loot seems shocked and confused when it sees the Thneed that the Once-ler makes from the tree.

The Lorax rises from the stump of the first tree. The Lorax has apparently been living within the tree, a kind of tree spirit, much like the Druids and Greeks believed. The adjectives used to describe the Lorax are indefinite: “He was shortish. And oldish. And brownish. And mossy. And he spoke with a voice that was sharpish and bossy” \((\text{Lorax 305})\). The Once-ler pays no heed to the Lorax, so he is unsure what the Lorax is really like. The Lorax introduces himself as an advocate for the trees. He is very angry at not just the destruction of the tree, but at the uselessness of the Thneed. At first, the Once-ler tries to support the usefulness of the Thneed, but when he sells the first one, he reveals that he knows the uselessness of the creation: “I laughed at the Lorax, ‘You poor stupid guy! You never can tell what some people will buy!’” \((\text{Lorax 310})\). The Bar-ba-loots look frightened as the man takes away the Thneed, as if they know what is to come. \((\text{See figure 3.7.})\)

The Once-ler’s operations quickly expand. He builds a factory, taking up land and beginning the cycle of pollution. He brings in his entire family, which crowds the area and provides further competition for resources with the animals that live there. He invents a machine to cut down many trees. Soon, the Lorax returns, leading the first exodus of animals from the
The Bar-ba-loots are the first to leave because of a lack of food. Some are so weak that they must be carried away. (See figure 3.8.) The Once-ler claims to be sad when they leave, but he does not consider stopping his business: “...business is business! And business must grow regardless of crummies in tummies, you know” (Lorax 321).

The business expands even further. The sky darkens, the hills are covered with stumps. Seuss is careful to show the exhaust coming from each truck, and from the factory itself. (See figure 3.9.) The next exodus comes soon after this expansion. The Lorax has also begun to have health problems: “He sneezed and he snuffled. He snarggled. He sniffed” (Lorax 324). He is leading away the Swomee-Swans, who must leave because “...why they can’t sing a note! No one can sing who has smog in his throat” (Lorax 324). The Lorax sends them away and then makes a comment about the global effects of what the Once-ler has done: “They may have to fly for a month...or a year...To escape from the smog you’ve smogged up around here” (Lorax 327). The sky has become even darker, and large purple-gray clouds hover around the factory. The Lorax takes the reader for the first time into the factory itself, to show what is polluting the waters -- Gluppity-Glupp and Schloppity-Schlopp. These substances are revolting green and yellow colors. When they come out of the factory, the Lorax shows us, they form a brown sludge which enters the pond and makes the fish unable to breathe. The fish also have to leave.

By this point in the text, the sky is completely black, and all of the animals are gone. The last Truffula tree is finally cut, and the remainder of the book is dedicated to the quick dismantling of the factory and the departure of the Once-ler’s family: “Now all that was left ’neath the bad-smelling sky was my big empty factory...the Lorax...and I” (Lorax 337). The Lorax himself leaves: “The Lorax said nothing. Just gave me a glance...just gave me a very sad, sad backward glance...as he lifted himself by the seat of his pants. And I’ll never forget the grim look on his face when he heisted himself and took leave of this place, through a hole in the smog, without leaving a trace” (Lorax 339). The Lorax leaves a monument to remind future generations. The responsible adult (the Once-ler) does not understand what it means. The Once-ler is sorry for what he has said: “I’ve worried about it with all of my heart” (Lorax 341). Seuss summarizes for us the meaning behind the Lorax’s monument, which the child stands on to listen to the Once-ler (which seems to make the monument look complete): “UNLESS someone like
you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not” (Lorax 342). The Once-ler hands the whole future of the ecosystem over to the child in the form of the last Truffula seed.

This is a tale about accountability. In the final lines of the book, the responsibility for the environment is handed over to the next generation. The question that a parent must ask is whether or not that generation has been taught how to care for the environment. The parent must ask what kind of example has been set for that generation. As the Lorax points out, the example has not been a good one.

*The Butter Battle Book* explores an issue which is now all but resolved -- the Cold War and the arms race of the 1980’s -- and creates a parable that many have found quite disturbing. *The Butter Battle Book* functions on two levels. There is a parable about the arms race on one level. Seuss wants to show the pointlessness of building up deadly weapons against the “enemy” as well as the absurdity of allowing separation and hatred on the basis of what boils down to mere differences in ideology. The process of propaganda is presented secondarily in the illustrations as a reminder that this is what the Cold War was about -- the perpetuation of stereotypes by internal propaganda. The propaganda campaign present in the book is so successful that the protagonist is willing to sacrifice his life for the “good of his country.” Seuss had a good deal of experience with propaganda in W.W.II, so this campaign is quite realistic and is one of the major strengths of the book. (See appendix 3.)

After Seuss’s concerns over the environment appeared in *The Lorax*, the arms race loomed large in his mind. Seuss felt that “under Ronald Reagan the nuclear arms race was beyond control” (Morgan 249). Seuss was mortally afraid of what he considered “deadly stupidity.” “‘I’m not antimilitary,’ he said. ‘I’m just anticrazy. We did the same thing in World War I and World War II. Why can’t we learn?’” (Morgan 249). So, in 1983, Seuss began work on work on *The Butter Battle Book*.

Seuss was unsure whether or not the book was meant for children: “I have no idea if this is an adult book for children or a children’s book for adults” (Morgan 250). Critics are equally divided on this issue: “Though young children may not see the parallel between the arms race and the story in the book, older children and adults definitely will. In the final analysis, the book is as much for adults as it is for children, and judicious use of it with children can lead to some
startling but heartening responses from them” (MacDonald 154). When the book first came out, parents were startled at the subject matter:

I became uneasy when I began to realize that the grandfather in the book was engaged in some primitive form of military escalation. Then Lucas’s parents said, ‘This doesn’t sound like a children’s book.’...We were all distressed that we had read such a book to our grandson. And Lucas, not comprehending fully what it meant, but feeling uneasy, wanted to read the book again. We did not read it again...I wondered how many of those who support mutual (sic) assured destruction are grandfathers or grandmothers or parents. I was also angry at Dr. Seuss, the storyteller, for tricking me into telling Lucas of the ‘mad’ reality of our arms race...I heard in my inner ear the words of Dr. Seuss to all giantkillers: ‘You are the one.’ I was captured in his parable. In judging his characters, I discovered that I had judged myself. I am the grandfather who through paring taxes and through insufficient opposition to the arms race has not done enough to make a different ending to the parable of The Butter Battle Book. (Bechtel 359)

This story, many critics agree, is one of the few that serves primarily as a book for adults. In fact, it had problems with sales; the publishers chose to strike a quote from Maurice Sendak from the cover: “Surprisingly, wonderfully, the case for total disarmament has been brilliantly made by our acknowledged master of nonsense, Dr. Seuss...Only a genius of the ridiculous could possibly deal with the cosmic and lethal madness of the nuclear arms race...He has done the world a service” (Morgan 252).

The story begins with the covers of the book. Both the front and inside covers are painted with legions of marching Seussian girls carrying banners with pictures of bread with the butter side up. (See figure 3.10.) This is the ideological difference between the two groups in the story. Seuss intentionally makes the difference ridiculous and superficial to heighten the feeling that the arms race was based on superficial differences. The first page of the book sets a time for the story, placing it in early fall. This is, as one critic put it, “the beginning of school or at least the end of something pleasurable” (MacDonald 158). Perhaps the end is of ignorance, blissful though it may be, and the beginning of knowledge. The illustration shows a tired old man, mouth turned down in a frown, dragging a child along by the hand toward the Wall on pages two and three. The text simply mentions the destination of the determined grandfather. It is the artwork of these pages that says the most. (See figure 3.11.) The Wall divides a beautiful green hill. However, the landscapes on both sides of the Wall are identical -- the houses are exactly the same, as are the trees, the sky, and the height of the grass. Surely, Seuss seems to be saying, people who live in such similar places cannot be so different. The Wall itself is reminiscent of the Berlin Wall, separating people of one ideology from those of another.
The concept which separates the Yooks and the Zooks is introduced on pages four and five. The fourth page is essentially an introduction of the separating function of the Wall. Both picture and text support this. Page five, however, presents the Zooks for the first time. The grandfather, under the guise of “educating” his grandson, says “‘It’s high time that you knew / of the terribly horrible thing that Zooks do. / In every Zook house and every Zook town / every Zook eats his bread / with the butter side down!’” (Butter 5). The accompanying picture shows a Zook couple, similar in appearance to the grandfather, simply wearing different colored clothes and eating their bread a different way. (See figure 3.12.) Seuss is intentionally making only slight differences in the “people” -- one can imagine that Seuss felt that differences in language and political ideology are just as silly reasons for dividing people. There is also a defense of The Butter Battle Book inherent in the statement. The exposure of hatred to the child seems harsh to the audience. However, it is done every day. These are the people who also object to The Butter Battle Book as being something that children are not ready to read.

Seuss explains the differences between the groups further, highlighting the absurdity of the situation. Yooks eat their bread “…butter side up. / That’s the right, honest way!” (Butter 6). The grandfather takes the difference here even further, to make a more grave accusation -- that Zooks cannot be trusted because of this behavior: “‘So you can’t trust a Zook who spreads bread underneath! / Every Zook must be watched! / He has kinks in his soul!’” (Butter 6). This sounds remarkably like anti-Communist sentiment, where a difference in political ideology turns people into world-conquering barbarians.

The grandfather then launches into the history of the Zook-Watching-Border-Patrol. The Wall is much lower at this earlier time, so the Yooks can see the Zooks. (The increase in the Wall’s size later suggests a need to separate the two groups of creatures further, to prevent even visual interaction.) The grandfather watches the evil Zooks, and carries a weapons, a “prickly Snick-Berry Switch.” The artwork here begins a series of highly effective pictures. The first weapon is primitive, a switch from a plant rather than a man-made weapon. (See figure 3.13.) The Zooks watching are not armed and watch with an amused expression. However, this peaceful time does not last long. VanItch, a “very rude Zook,” slingshots the switch and destroys it. The name is “foreign sounding, of unspecific origin to American ears; it is also suggestive of the kind of threat posed by the Zook, for he is no more dangerous or annoying than an itch, an
irritation that should be tolerated rather than threatened within an inch of mutually assured self-destruction” (MacDonald 160). The act of breaking the switch is the only instance in which “shots” are fired. The battles after this are presumably to assure that such aggression never occurs again. They are more a sequence of military one-up-manship than actual battles.

The grandfather goes to the “Chief Yookeroo” with his broken switch. The Chief Yookeroo (remaining all smiles in the illustration) orders “the Boys in the Back Room to figger / how to build [him] some sort of a triple-sling-jigger” (Butter 13). The Boys in the Back Room have only a drawing board, pencils, and some paper. They are smiling, bespectacled creatures that look quite friendly. (See figures 3.14.a and 3.14.b.) They design the Triple-Sling Jigger with amazing speed and send the Yook back to the Wall.

Armed with what the Yook thinks is an invincible weapon, he returns and tells Vanltch that “[He’ll] have no more nonsense...from Zooks who eat bread with the butter side down!” (Butter 15). This is apparently the worst insult that the Yooks’ culture has produced. There is nothing worse that he could be, judging from the incongruity of the insult with its context. The creature whom he is insulting is a Zook who quite literally does eat his bread with the butter side down. The name-calling is much like the insult of being called a “Commie bastard” during the Red Scare or Cold War. Vanltch runs off, presumably to his Boys in the Back Room, returning with a Jigger-Rock Snatchen to fling back any rocks that the Yook slings over the Wall. This is a defensive weapon, indicating that the Zook wants to be able to protect his country, not destroy the country of the Yooks. (See figure 3.15.) This is the purpose of the entire arms race, in fact: the building up of weapons to ensure that the other side will not become the aggressor. The Zook also flings back the ideologically-based insult: “...you Yooks who eat bread with the butter side up!” echoing the Soviet insult of “Capitalist pig.” This indicates that the Zook is unwilling to appear nonagressive, even though his weapon is a defensive one,

Each visit to the Boys in the Back Room results in a bigger, more modern, “walloping whizz-zinger” weapon. There follows a parade of “gun-toting spaniels” and weapons such as the Kick-a-Poo-Kid (powered by “poo-a-Doo powder and ants’ legs and bees’ legs and deep fried clam chowder” -- compounds which are well-known, supposedly to the Yooks and are easy to control) the Eight -Nozzled, Elephant-Toted Boom Blitz, the Utterly Sputter. (See figure 3.16.a through d.) At the level of the Utterly Sputter, the technologies apparently catch up with each
other, as both Yook and Zook approach the Wall with the same weapon. The names are different (the “Utterly Sputter” versus the “Blue Gooer”) but the appearances and method of operation are the same. A standoff ensues; each side knows what the other can do. It is fear that keeps the Yooks from firing. The Yook retreats, looking psychologically spent, morale destroyed, without having fired a shot. This standoff is reminiscent of the Cuban Missile Crisis, one of many loose parallels upon which Dr. Seuss based this book.

The Boys in the Back Room in these pages are increasingly overworked, with more pencils, more papers, but the Boys keep up their smile. After all, the weapons that they are developing will not harm them. They will destroy only Zooks. However, as they develop the Bitsy Big Boy Boomeroo (analogous to nuclear weapons), the Boys crouch behind a cracked door, peering out with fearful looks as the Chief Yookeroo gives the tiny bomb to the Border Patrol officer with a long tong-like device. (See figure 3.17.) Papers are scattered all over the office, suggesting a long struggle. Whether a moral or intellectual debate occurred is not clear; it may not even be important. “‘Have no fears,’ said the Chief,” reassuring the one who will sacrifice his life, contradicting his own personal fears that are evident in both him and the boys in the Back Room. Seuss even attacks the unpredictability of and incomplete science behind nuclear weaponry in one simple sentence: “It is filled with mysterious Moo-Lacka-Moo / and can blow all those Zooks clear to Sala-ma-goo” (Butter 34).

As every Yook goes underground for the biggest battle ever, the grandfather takes the grandson (a divergence from the original frame story, granted) and pulls him toward the Wall, holding the Bitsy Big Boy Boomeroo, ignoring the fear obvious in the illustration of the boy, in a fury of outraged patriotism. As expected, VanItch returns at the same time with the same weapon. The conclusion of the book is as uncertain as the outcome of the arms race was in the mid-eighties: “‘Grandpa! I shouted. ’Be careful! Oh gee! / Who’s going to drop it? / Will you...? Or will he...?’ / Be patient,’ said Grandpa. ‘We’ll see, / We will see....’” (Butter 40). Seuss felt that this was “the only honest [ending]” (Morgan 250). This ending, however, serves as a poignant fear appeal. The reader feels much like the young child clinging to the tree, mouth agape in stark terror. (See figure 3.18.) Seuss reduces the arms race to one question: “Who will drop the bomb?” Seuss obviously hopes that the answer will be “no one.”
Why would an ordinary Yook suddenly be willing to give his life to kill a group of people who simply eat their bread a different way? Because he has been propagandized. Propaganda occurs on both side of the Wall. The first picture of the Zooks that we see is in a typical Zook home at mealtime. As they eat their bread, the attention of the reader is drawn to a banner on the wall behind them: “Butter side down!” it proclaims. The next page shows a poster on the Yook side of the Wall: “Yooks are not Zooks! Keep your butter side up!” The first poster proclaims only the Zook ideology. The Yook poster, however, acknowledges the presence of another way of thought and reinforces the behavior of the Yooks. As the arms race escalates, the uniforms of each side become more and more elaborate. (See figures.) Rituals abound. People cheer the brave Yook soldier on, chanting slogans: “....everyone cheered and their cheers filled the sky: / ‘Fight! Fight for the Butter Side Up! / Do or die!’” This is the first mention of the willingness to die for their cause. Bands play, the Right-Side-Up girls carry banners. The bunker is labeled “Your Yookery,” reminding the Yooks of their identity even in the darkest of hours. The campaign is so successful that the protagonist does not only stand on the Wall, face to face with annihilation; he takes his grandson with him. This Yook would risk anything for his ideology.

Critics of the book on political grounds take it quite seriously and respond to it on an adult level. They criticize the symbol of the wall. Seuss’s Wall is much like the Berlin Wall “that stark prison boundary reminding the world that the heart of the East-West struggle is human liberty versus totalitarian tyranny, not American failure to comprehend Russian food, music, and poetry” (National Review, 15). The author of this article also criticizes the inconclusive ending as contradictory to Seuss’s message, saying that “Seuss reminds us that nuclear weapons have kept the peace for nearly forty years now.” He finally concludes that Seuss’s intended message is lost, because “Seuss’s books are always ridiculous, after all.” Another critic, John Garvey, is disturbed by the simplicity of the story: “Let’s rewrite the book. On one side of the wall people who don’t believe in butter at all are put into prison, and some of them are killed. On the other side, people whose color is wrong are forced into poverty, and those who protest are tortured.” Garvey condemns what he calls Seuss’s “liberal sentimentality” and urges his readers to teach their children “that the arms race is something which cannot be compromised and evils which must be resisted” (Garvey 424). Dr. Seuss’s message must have some impact to lead to such serious responses.
Dr. Seuss had his own evaluation of the effectiveness of *The Butter Battle Book*: "Right after that [the televising of *The Butter Battle Book* on New Year’s Day of 1990 in the Soviet Union] the U.S.S.R. began falling apart" (Morgan 255). Leave it to the good Dr. Seuss to put it so succinctly.

The message books are considered adult reading because of their complex messages. However, the complexity of the books arises more in the complex treatments that Seuss gives his topics. This is complexity aimed at the adult reader, the only reader who till truly appreciate it.
Messages for Everyone:
Figures Section 3

3.1 Horton Hears a Who!
   p. 1

3.2 Horton Hears a Who!
   p. 8
3.4b *Horton Hears a Who!*

p. 32

3.5 *The Lorax*

p. 284
3.6 *The Lorax*
   p. 296

3.7 *The Lorax*
   p. 311
3.8 The Lorax
p. 321

3.9 The Lorax
p. 322
3.10 The Butter Battle Book
front cover

3.11 The Butter Battle Book
p. 2
3.12 The Butter Battle Book
p. 5

3.13 The Butter Battle Book
p. 8
p. 14

3.15 The Butter Battle Book
p. 17
3.16 *The Butter Battle Book*

p. 20-21
3.16b *The Butter Battle Book*

p. 23
3.16c *The Butter Battle Book*
   p. 31
3.17 The Butter Battle Book
p. 35
3.18 The Butter Battle Book
p. 40
Dr. Seuss constantly advocates the importance of a child’s imagination and the right of the child to exercise that imagination. In Seuss’s Beginner Books, this powerful imagination is often examined. Books such as *The Cat in the Hat*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, and *Oh, the Thinks You Can Think!* employ these themes, appealing to children and to the causal adult reader. These books are aimed mainly at children due to the nature of Beginner Books themselves. Beginner Books were created to do much what their name implies, to teach children to read. Seuss was instrumental in the creation of the Beginner Books division of Random House (hence the use of the Cat in the Hat icon in the Beginner Book logo). In the Beginner Books that he authored, however, there is once again the tendency to work adult themes into the work, albeit much more subtly than in other of Seuss’s works. These texts are illuminating to the adult reading the book, giving a picture of the nature of the imagination of a child. Messages are largely absent because the child is intended to read the book him/herself.

The Beginner Books division was born in 1958, inspired by the publishing of *The Cat in the Hat*. The books have a limited vocabulary list, consisting of 379 words. Each author chooses 200, with a list of 20 “emergency” words. This artistic limitation has obvious thematic ramifications. Few complex themes can be worked into the text with such a limited vocabulary. *The Cat in the Hat* was written using a 225-word vocabulary list. *Green Eggs and Ham* is a special case, written on a dare and consisting of only 50 words. *Oh, the Things you can Think!*, not particularly lauded by critics, is the most typical Beginner Book of the three. It was written using a typical vocabulary list and the results of this are Seussian in the most typical way, relying more on the illustrations and nonsense words for what can be termed the “Seussian effect.” Each of the three books has varying levels of inherent themes, the most rich being *The Cat in the Hat*. Seuss once discussed the difficulties of writing within these parameters: “I solved my problem by writing *The Cat in the Hat*. How I did this is no trade secret. The method I used is the same
method you use when you sit down to make apple stroodle without stroodles. You forget all about time, you go to work with what you have! You take your limited, uninteresting ingredients (in my case 223 words) and day and night, month after month, you mix them up into thousands of different combinations. You bake a batch. You taste it. Then you hurl it out of the window. Until finally one night, when it is darkest before dawn, a plausible stroodle-less stroodle begins to take shape before your eyes! Since The Cat I’ve been trying to invent some easier method. But I am afraid the above procedure will always be par for the course. At least it will be just as long as the course is laid out on a word list” (“How Orlo,” 60).

The Cat in the Hat himself has become representative of Seuss’s work, becoming an icon for childlike imagination. The book is a virtual study in the workings of a child’s imagination, embodying this abstract notion in a separate entity. The characterization of the imagination as a separate entity implies a lack of ability on the part of the child to control such a powerful aspect of the mind. The Cat in the Hat can be seen as a learning process on the part of the protagonist, a child who is struggling to learn to limit his own imagination (perhaps Marco’s father as a child?) to those fantasies which are duller and thus fit in to an adult world. The book opens with two children sitting in a pristine, obviously adult world. They have nothing to do and resort to imaginary games in order to entertain themselves. The toys pictured in the early pages of the book are all toys which must be used outside, indicating the rule of no playing in the house and adding to the feeling of ennui present in the early pages of the text. (See figure 4.1) The boy takes the lead, perhaps reminiscent of the order in the adult world which the two try to emulate. The Cat enters uninvited, as if the children cannot help but enter into these games in their own private world. The children seem unable to answer for themselves, having apparently been told again and again what to do. These children do not think for themselves at all, and let the strange Cat in without knowing what to do with no adult figure to consult. The adult figure is the fish, content enough to sleep when the children are simply sitting passively, obviously bored but not disturbing the adult realm. When the Cat enters the house, the facial expression of the fish changes drastically to a disturbed, irritated expression. (See figures 4.2 and 4.2b.) He scolds the Cat and the children, wanting the Cat to leave, telling the children in typically adult fashion that they do not want to play. The Cat takes control, however, paying no attention to the totalitarian fish, resembling the subversive nature of imagination itself. Through imagination, children
become no longer subject to the authority of adults. The fish remains obviously uptight, as seen through the illustrations and his words: “‘Put me down!’ said the fish. / ‘This is no fun at all! / Put me down!’ said the fish. / ‘I do NOT wish to fall!’” (Cat 13). The fish has learned to be unable to let go and simply indulge in childlike fun. The Cat begins a dangerous balancing game, using more and more of the objects which the paradoxically omnipresent mother figure likely does not let the children touch or play with: a bottle of milk, a glass, a cup, a rake, the fish and his bowl, a decorative fan, and an umbrella. The Cat does not remain balanced for long and the unthinkable happens. The Cat falls with all of these breakable, spillable objects. The fish scolds, an unusual mix of concern for the children’s toys and the objects which are obviously the property of a parent. After this failure, the Cat brings in reinforcements, Thing One and Thing Two, creatures which epitomize carelessness and irresponsibility. (See figure 4.3.) These Things or “figments of the imagination” are allowed to run free. The children again are unsure of how to handle the situation and resort to the teachings of their mother, shaking hands politely with the Things, which promptly run throughout the house and wreak havoc. The outside occupations which the children are so careful not to bring inside on a wet day are brought inside, the Things run in the house, they touch Mother’s new dress, they play in her room. They break rules which have obviously been instilled in the children.

The children, upon seeing their mother coming home, must hide the evidence of their imaginary dalliances. The boy then takes charge, capturing the Things with a net as the girl stands in the background and cheers him on. The imagination again comes to the rescue in the figure of the Cat as he helps them to clean up the mess that he made. This twofold nature of the Cat shows the different ways that a child’s imagination can function -- as a productive force or a destructive force. The children return to their chairs, sitting by the window in the once again pristine house. They do not tell the mother about the events of the day: “Should we tell her about it? / Well... / What would YOU do / If your mother asked YOU?” (Cat 61). The answer to this concluding question is, of course, that the child would lie, preferring to pretend that s/he had spent the entire day in the “real world” -- the physical world that the adult figures in the life of a child so often advocate. The children walk a thin line between this adult-determined reality and the freedom of their own imaginations.
Thus within the text, adults can glean a number of messages. The most important theme for adults is likely the process of the child’s imagination. The child’s imaginations begin in fairly mundane fashion, imagining a cat, imagining a cat in a hat. These beginning images give way to consistently more elaborate images and circumstances until the reader and the children are left with the rubble of a once-neat home. The ability of the child’s imagination to be productive is illustrated by the clean-up sequence in which the children undo the damage that the cat has done. The desire of children to fit into the adult scheme of the world is also illustrated by the children’s behavior -- the boy’s actions getting rid of the Things, the passivity of the female character (remember that this was written in the 1950s), the obedience to authority -- all of these are the result of a desire to be a part of the adult world for which parents are preparing their children. The authority given to a child narrator is also unusual, giving a more adult appearance to the boy protagonist. These efforts to give the children authority in the adult world enables adult readers to sympathize more with these children who are trying to sublimate their powers of imagination into suitable outlets. The adult reader is made conscious of the fact that limitations are placed upon the wild, powerful imaginations of children. There is not a value judgment placed upon this tendency within the text. Alison Lurie has pointed out the value judgment which may in fact be present in the text -- that it is best to keep the imaginary life within:

The message that it is sometimes, perhaps always, best to conceal one’s inner life reappears in *The Cat in the Hat*. Here ‘Sally and I,’ two children alone and bored on a rainy day, are visited by the eponymous Cat. He proceeds to totally destroy the house, causing first excitement and then panic (What will their mother say?). Finally he puts everything back in place. The kids -- and not only those in the story, but those who read it -- have vicariously given full reign to their destructive impulses without guilt or consequences. When their mother returns and asks what they’ve been doing, there is a strong suggestion that they might not tell her....In these tales the children whose imagination transforms the world are abashed or secretive when confronted with possible adult approval. (Lurie 50)

Although this is true, there is the feeling that Lurie perhaps misses the real conflict within these tales -- the conflict between the power of the imagination and the desire of the child to grow into the world of the adult. Lurie points out in another article the feeling that many adults may have reading this text: “Grown-ups reading this story aloud may feel uneasy; we prefer to think of children as ingenuous and confiding” (“Subversive” 72). Adults can read these tales,
however, and gain an understanding of the position in which children are frequently placed: “...it makes sense that the very facet of children that seems to provoke parents’ wrath -- the childlike imagination -- is the facet that parents themselves need to reexperience in order to regain happiness; in fact, it is because parents are cut off from, and longing for, connections with their own imaginations that they resent children’s access to the imagination” (Wolf 138). Wolf also discusses the fear of rejection which children possess. These children want to fit into the adult world in order to prevent their rejection by their parents. This complex psychological situation is presented within each of these texts as well as the “big books” with the same themes.

Green Eggs and Ham is a Beginner Book with much the same themes as Cat. Tim Wolf deals with this book in his article “Imagination, Rejection, and Rescue”: “Within the 51-word vocabulary of Green Eggs and Ham, Seuss re-introduces the most important aspects of his first three books -- the grouchy rejecting parent and the happy accepting parent, the rejected child and the child’s mission to rescue the parent, the healing power of the childlike imagination and the association of the imagination with childhood libidinal drives -- perhaps even a subversion and simultaneous reinforcement of the reading process” (Wolf 153). The book does indeed incorporate these themes. The character Sam is the childlike protagonist, introduced in a most childlike fashion. He is trying to get the attention of the parent figure who ignores him. Sam rides by on a dog-like creature, holding a sign which identifies him, a typical tactic of a child who has been told to be quiet but still seeks attention in a quiet but annoying way. (See figure 4.4.) The parent becomes angry at Sam’s intrusion into his life, making a judgment by stating his dislike for the child: “That Sam-I-am! / That Sanl-I-am! / I do not like / that Sam-I-am!” (Sam 9). The older figure makes this judgments of dislike for things which he has not tried, such as green eggs and ham. The persistent Sam keeps attempting some acknowledgment of good by trying to get him to try the ham and eggs. The opening question “Do you like green eggs and ham?” is asked with the food on the end of a long arm-like extension. (See figure 4.5.) Sam appears to want to be as far away from the parent figure as possible, perhaps for physical protection. This image of adults is not particularly flattering and older (adult) readers may see themselves in this portrayal, and Wolf points out that “children see adults this way more often than adults might like to think” (Wolf 155). As the adult figure continually rejects the child’s offer of green eggs and ham, there are moments in the pictures in which Sam is pushed to the margins of the parent’s
attention, suggesting rejection and a desire of the parent to minimize contact with the child who is regarded as merely a burden on him. (See figure 4.6.) At other points, the Sam figure disappears completely. (See figure 4.7.) Sam’s continual questioning puts conditions on the judgment which the parent-figure has already made, suggesting that Sam realizes the subjectivity of certain judgments, particularly when the judgment regards “like” or “dislike.” Perhaps he knows that when the parent figure claims not to like him, it is within the parameters of the situation, not a blanket judgment which means that the parent does not like the child at all. Pictorially, there is a chase around which the text revolves. Sam chases the parent figure throughout the text, refusing to leave him alone until he is satisfied and receives some acknowledgment of happiness from the parent. It is only when the parent figure becomes tired of Sam’s constant pestering that he is able to rid himself of the child by giving into his repeated requests to try the green eggs and ham. The joy on Sam’s face is apparent. (See figure 4.8.) Typical of Seuss, the child is the character who possesses wisdom. The parent figure must acknowledge that Sam is right and begins to view him (or her, as Tim Wolf points out) in a more friendly light. Both the parent and the child are happy at the end of the text, the parent because he has been introduced to a new source of happiness and Sam because of the positive attention that he receives from his parent.

The progression of the childish imagination is also present within the text and the accompanying artwork. The circumstances in which Sam believes his parent might like green eggs and ham grow steadily, becoming more and more elaborate, beginning with the conditions “here or there” and growing to having a car on a train in the dark, in the rain, et cetera. These conditions show a progression that Seuss often places within his work -- the beginning of a thought process with something quite simple and allowing that thought to grow into something quite outlandish, a process with which Seuss seems to be fascinated. The seemingly illogical images and comments of children are explained by this process. There is a traceable process by which children think, and Seuss outlines it for adults within his books.

Oh, the Thinks You Can Think! is a more typical Beginner Book. The book received a good deal of negative criticism when it appeared in 1975, but one must remember that the objective of Beginner Books was to provide beginning readers with suitable material. Critics spoiled by works such as The Cat in the Hat and Green Eggs and Ham disliked the book for its
simplicity and at times criticized it for flaws which were more deservedly placed at the door of the Beginner Books division itself: “Beginner Books are intended to be simple enough for abecedarians to read by themselves. Dr. Seuss is one of the most popular contributors to this genre and this one, which is simple-minded as well as simple, will probably be undeservedly read, reread, even memorized. One wonders how long this substandard nonsense...can last. Probably as long as substandard reading levels prevail” (Publisher’s Weekly 72). Critics such as these are used to reading Seuss’s books and enjoying them for the richness that Seuss achieved by placing adult themes within the context of a work for children. This book, ostensibly one of the few that is actually written entirely for children, is an anomaly within the work of Seuss. Critics at the time condemned the book for this singular focus, although several pointed out the continuity of the theme of the power of imagination: “[This] is not exactly the master’s Seusstine Ceiling, but it contains, as usual, one of his solid-gold morals, the joy of letting one’s imagination rip. In my opinion Dr. Seuss deserves the Nobel Prize. Think of the influence he has had on the human race! And all of it good! Can Henry Kissinger say the same?” (Langton 42). Langton appears to understand that this book is completely for children, and the negative publicity which it received is indicative not of the lack of quality of the work as a whole.

The Beginner Books have a primary educational function. As such, the books lack a good deal of the thematic possibilities of the “big books.” Some critics understand this limitation and primary educational goal and refer to Seuss as “…an American pioneer educator who has worked with Random House, New York, to produce often bizarre but highly successful children’s readers” (McArthur 27). Seuss used the forum of the Beginner Books to bring forth his favorite themes, but primarily, these are meant to be an educational tool. Seuss meant these books to be entertaining to adults and in some cases, enlightening, but they lack the ambiguity of the other books and must be dealt with as separate cases. Sometimes, a children’s book is just a children’s book, but not often when the author is Dr. Seuss.
The Educational Aim: The Beginner Books
Figures Section 4

4.1 The Cat in the Hat
p. 2

4.2 The Cat in the Hat
p. 3
4.2b *The Cat in the Hat*

p. 11

4.3 *The Cat in the Hat*

p. 33
4.4 Green Eggs and Ham
p. 3
4.5 Green Eggs and Ham
p. 10-11
4.6 Green Eggs and Ham
p. 17

4.7 Green Eggs and Ham
p. 21
4.8 *Green Eggs and Ham*

p. 54-55
The appeal of Dr. Seuss, then, is as manifold as his approach to his writing. As children, we are drawn to Seuss’s artwork on a visceral level, and we are drawn to the singsong patterns of his words. As adults, we realize that Seuss’s work has taught us lessons and that it continues to teach us lessons as we read and re-read these works to our children.

The thing that draws readers back to Dr. Seuss is the complexity. There is a play between art and text which is important in Seussian literature. Reprinted without pictures, the text lacks much of its meaning and life. This aspect grew in importance throughout Seuss’s career. Perhaps it is because the concepts in Seuss’s later books were more complex than earlier ones. Whatever the reasons, the fact is that Seuss became more adept at linking one to the other. In every picture, there is detail which is constantly being discovered by the reader as the reader matures and re-reads the book. These books are works of art which transcend genre.

Whether Seuss teaches us about the responsibilities that we have toward ourselves or the responsibilities that we have toward the world around us, his lessons follow us all throughout our lives. The texts are as rich with meaning and as able to withstand analysis as any work in the Western canon. We have been profoundly touched by the good doc, and the only lesson left to learn is the importance of the master to our literature and our culture as a whole.
Appendix I

Dr. Seuss Books in Print

And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street
Bartholomew & the Oobleck
The Butter Battle Book
Cat in the Hat
Cat in the Hat Comes Back
Cat in the Hat Songbook
The Cat’s Quizzer
Daisy-Head Mayzie
Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?
Dr. Seuss’s ABC
Dr. Seuss’s Sleep Book
The Five Hundred Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins
Foot Book
Fox in Socks
Great Day for Up!
Green Eggs and Ham
Happy Birthday to You
Hop on Pop
Horton Hatches the Egg
Horton Hears a Who
How the Grinch Stole Christmas
Hunches in Bunches
I Am Not Going to Get up Today!
I Can Draw It Myself: With a Little Help from My Friend Dr. Seuss
I Can Lick Thirty Tigers Today and Other Stories
I can Read with My Eyes Shut!
I Had Trouble in Getting to Solla Sollew
If I Ran the Circus
If I Ran the Zoo
The King’s Stilts
The Lorax
McElligot’s Pool
Marvin K. Mooney, Will You Please Go Now!
Mister Brown Can Moo, Can You?
My Book about Me
Oh, Say Can You See?
Oh! The Things You Can Think!
On Beyond Zebra
One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish
Scrambled Eggs Super!
The Seven Lady Godivas
Shape of Me & Other Stuff
Sneetches & Other Stuff
There’s a Wocket in my Pocket!
Thidwick, the Big-Hearted Moose
Yertle the Turtle & Other Stories
You’re Only Old Once!
Appendix 2

Photo Gallery

Ted in New York with PM (Morgan)

Ted in his studio in La Jolla with the Cat (Morgan)

Ted (age 82) at opening of exhibit of his work in San Diego (Morgan)
Appendix 3

*Time Line*

- March 2, 1904 -- born in Springfield, Massachusetts
- 1909 -- father appointed to board of Springfield Park, where zoo was located
- 1914 -- opening of Panama Canal
- April 6, 1917 -- US entered war against Germany
- May 2, 1918 -- Ted met Theodore Roosevelt
- 1919 -- Ted began cartooning and writing satire for school newspaper; first usage of pseudonym LeSieg
- September 1921 -- Ted entered Dartmouth College, began work on *Jacko*, the campus comedy magazine
- January 1923 -- Ted elected to *Jacko* art staff
  Began writing course with Ben Pressey
- May 15, 1924 -- Ted elected editor-in-chief of *Jacko*
- April 1925 -- Ted caught for possession of bootlegged liquor, placed on probation by Dean Craven Laycock; lost editorship of *Jacko*; first usage of pseudonym Seuss
- June 23, 1925 -- graduated from Dartmouth
- October, 1925 -- Ted arrived at Oxford, enrolled in Lincoln College
- 1926 -- met Helen Marion Palmer, the future Mrs. Geisel
- June 10, 1926 -- Ted left Oxford
- February 13, 1927 -- Ted returned to the US
- July 16, 1927 -- cartoon published in *The Saturday Evening Post* under name of Seuss
- October 22, 1927 -- received job at Republican magazine *Judge*
- November 27, 1927 -- Ted and Helen married
- 1928 -- worked for Standard Oil advertising for Flit
  toured Europe
  published in *Life, Liberty, and Vanity Fair*
- March 23, 1929 -- cover of *Judge* featured Seussian animals; soon after, featured on the cover of *Life*
- December 1929 -- met niece for the first time
- March 8, 1931 -- Ted's mother died
- 1931 -- offered job illustrating children's book of sayings called *Boners*
- 1936 -- Ted and Helen traveled to Europe; *Mulberry Street* begun
- 1938 -- *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins* published
- 1939 -- Peggy (Ted's niece) stayed with Helen and Ted for the summer
  *The Seven Lady Godivas* published
  *The King's Stilts* published
- 1940 -- *Horton Hatches the Egg* published
- June 1941 -- Geisels moved to La Jolla, California
April 26, 1942 -- PM published cartoon of Senator Gerald P. Nye as a horse’s ass as commentary on his urging Americans to stay out of the war
1942 -- Ted joined Frank Capra’s Signal Corps to work on propaganda and training films during W.W.II
November 11, 1944 -- traveled to Europe with films to show to military leaders
1945 -- wrote film treatment that “warned of the potential threat of devastating explosions” (Morgan 115)
September 14, 1945 -- sister Marnie died
January 13, 1946 -- Ted left army, received Legion of Merit for film
1947 -- McElliot’s Pool published
1948 -- Thidwick the Big-Hearted Moose published
1949 -- Bartholomew and the Oobleck published
July 1949 -- Ted invited to lecture at writing conference
If I Ran the Zoo published New Yorker
1951 -- cartoon for which Seuss wrote the screenplay (Gerald McBoing Boing) won Academy Award for best cartoon
January 1953 -- film The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T appeared
1953 -- work begun on Horton Hears a Who
January 1953 -- Horton Hears a Who completed
1957 -- The Cat in the Hat
How the Grinch Stole Christmas both published
1958 -- Random House launched Beginner Books
Yertle the Turtle published
1959 -- One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish published
1960 -- Green Eggs and Ham published
Ted met Audrey and Grey Diamond (the second future Mrs. Geisel)
December 17, 1960 -- profile of Dr. Seuss published
August 1961 -- The Sneetches published
1962 -- Dr. Seuss's Sleep Book published
1963 -- Hop on Pop published
Dr. Seuss's ABC Book published
April 1965 -- I Had Trouble in Getting to Solla Sollew published
May 19, 1966 -- Random House sold to RCA
1966 -- Helen planned word list for Beginner Books
film version of The Grinch begun
October 23, 1967 -- Helen committed suicide after long illness
1968 -- special collection of Seuss books, originals, memorabilia established at UCLA
August 5, 1968 -- Ted and Audrey married
December 9, 1968 -- Ted's father died
October, 1969 -- I Can Lick 30 Tigers Today! and Other Stories published; work begun on I Can Draw It Myself and Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?
September 1970 -- work begun on The Lorax
1972 -- Marvin K. Mooney, Will You Please Go Now! published; television version of The Lorax appeared
1973 -- The Shape of Me and Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are? published
1975 -- Oh, the Things You Can Think! published
1976 -- Ted's treatments for cataracts and glaucoma began; periodically lost eyesight
1978 -- Ted and Audrey toured Casablanca, Fez, and Marrakech
1979 -- Oh, Say Can You Say? published
1980 -- Ted received Laura Ingalls Wilder Award
1982 -- Hunches in Bunches published
March 2, 1984 -- The Butter Battle Book published; Ted's 80th birthday
1984 -- attended state dinner at the White House
1985 -- given honorary degree by Princeton University
1986 -- You're Only Old Once! published
May 17, 1986 -- exhibition of Dr. Seuss's work opened in San Diego
1990 -- Oh, the Places You'll Go! published; Ted considered it his farewell
1991 -- Six by Seuss the Book-of-the-Month
September 24, 1991 -- Theodor Seuss Geisel died
Appendix 4
Political Cartoons and Ads by
Dr. Seuss

Foil the Karbo-nockus!

Essolube
5-STAR MOTOR OIL
Forms less carbon
These are just a few of the many political cartoons Dr. Seuss drew in an effort to motivate and keep motivated the country in its efforts to rid the world of the Nazi's and their leader Hitler.
"Sid! Boom! Bah! Rah!
Sid! Boom! Bah! Rah!
Million! Billion! Trillion! Billion!
Sid! Boom! Bah!"

"Russians
Killed"

128,278
10,200,777
18,522,222
44,444,444
93,201,208
198,000,000
328,220,236
519,520,529
99,800,000,001

"Fat your arm up like this, and your troubles are over..."
I hope to get some more and post them, my intentions are to get a large library of them, and rotate in and out about 5 or 6 images. Keep checking to see if the new stuff arrives.


“Oh, the Things You Can Think!” *Publisher’s Weekly*. November 3, 1975. 72.


-----. *Oh, the Things You Can Think!* New York: Random House, 1975.