

3.5 Sir John Tenniel



Figure 74 - John Tenniel

3.5.1 Life

John Tenniel was born in London in 1820. His parents lived in Kensington and, due to their limited financial means, they could not afford a complete formal education for all their six children. Tenniel attended the local primary school and learnt fencing, dancing and riding from his father, who was a dancing and fencing master.³⁰²

Tenniel liked reading, going to the theatre and sketching. Encouraged by the painter John Martin – who was a friend of his parents – he started to visit London art galleries and museums, where he copied works into a sketchbook. At the age of sixteen he exhibited his first oil paintings at the Society of British Artists. He was then admitted to the Royal Academy Schools. In 1840 Tenniel was accidentally wounded by his father during a fencing lesson and the cut blinded his right eye. Since his father did not realise

³⁰² Curtis, Perry L. "Tenniel, Sir John (1820-1914)." In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/index/101036458/John-Tenniel>. (accessed February 28, 2014); Allingham, Philip V. "Sir John Tenniel (1820-1914), *Punch* Cartoonist and Illustrator of Lewis Carroll's *Alice Books*". In *The Victorian Web*, edited by George P. Landow. <http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/tenniel/pva65.html>. (accessed February 28, 2014); Houfe, Simon, *The Dictionary of British Book Illustrators and Caricaturists 1800-1914*, cit, pp. 64-66.

to have injured him, Tenniel decided to keep the accident hidden to spare his father any sense of guilt.

Not satisfied with the curriculum and the teaching methods of the Academy, in the mid 1840s Tenniel left it to join the Clipstone Street Art Society. In the same years he started to contribute illustrations for some books, such as Samuel Carter Hall's *The Book of British Ballads* (1842) and *Heath's Book of Beauty* (1845) by Charles Keene. In 1845 the Fine Art Commission announced a competition for the realisation of the frescoes in the new House of Lords. Tenniel submitted a 16-foot high design entitled *The Spirit of Justice* which was awarded £200. Eventually, the Fine Art Commission chose the design submitted by Daniel Maclise, which received a premium of £250. However, the following year Tenniel was asked to paint a smaller fresco illustrating John Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* in the Poets Hall, located in the House of Lords.



Figure 75 - John Tenniel, *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (1850)

In 1848 he illustrated a new edition of the fables of Æsop by Rev. Thomas James. The drawings realised for this book were to lead to an important change in Tenniel's life and career. His illustrations, in fact, caught the attention of the two main founders of *Punch*, that is, Douglas Jerrold and Mark Lemon. When in 1850 Richard Doyle decided to resign from the periodical, Jerrold and Lemon hired Tenniel.

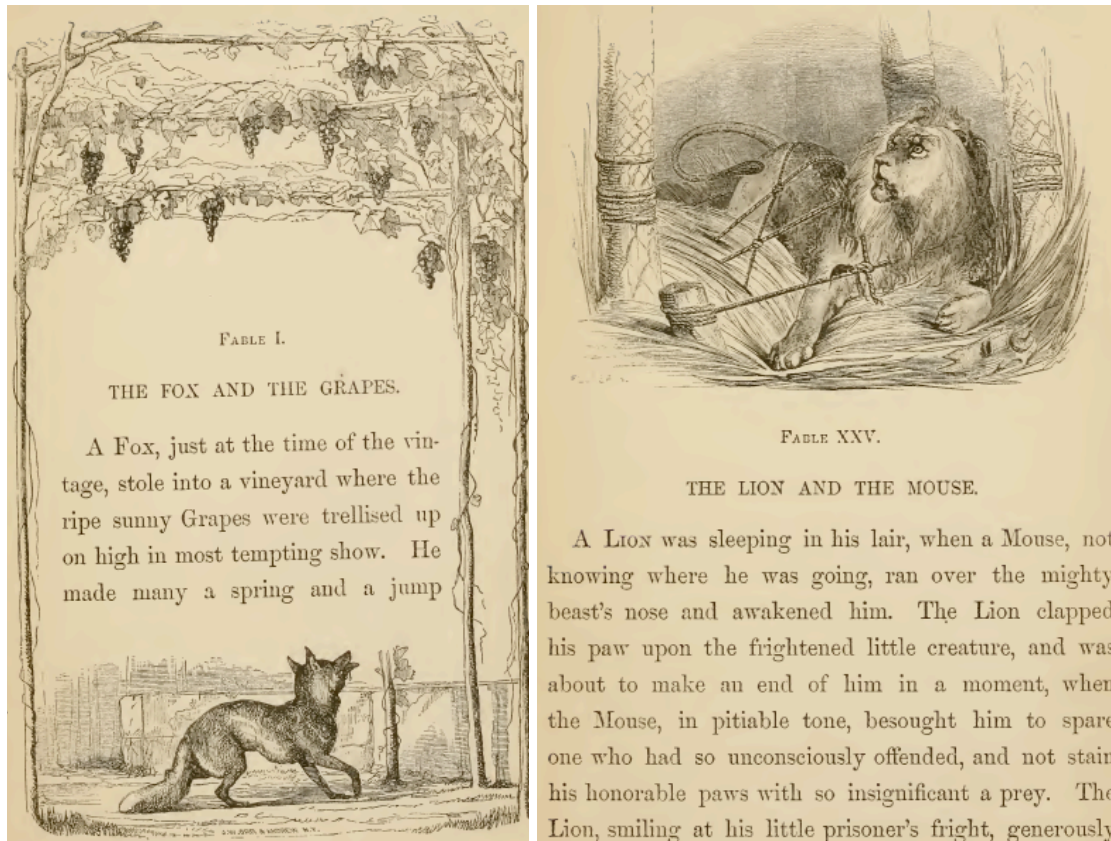


Figure 76 - John Tenniel, *Æsop's Fables* (1848)

At the beginning he only drew some 'small cuts' for the almanacs and the pocket books. Then he started to deal with the ornaments, the initial letters and the frontispieces "taking over from John Leech that onerous weekly job to which the latter was somewhat unsuited."³⁰³ The *Punch* years also marked the beginning of the tight and enduring collaboration with two teams of engravers, Joseph Swan and his son Joseph Blomley

³⁰³ Houfe, Simon, *The Dictionary of British Book Illustrators and Caricaturists 1800-1914*, cit., p. 64.

Swan, and the brothers Edward and George Dalziel. In 1854 he married Julia Giani who, unfortunately, died of tuberculosis only two years after the marriage.

After the sudden death of John Leech, in 1864, Tenniel became the principal cartoonist at *Punch*. He maintained this position until his retirement in 1900 and during his whole career at *Punch* he contributed about two hundred cartoons.



Figure 77 - John Tenniel, *Cartoons* (1901)

Chapter 3 - Illustrators of the Grotesque and the Gothic



Figure 78 - John Tenniel, Cartoons (1901)

The year after his retirement his friends at *Punch* as well as the social and political élite around him organised a dinner to celebrate Tenniel; the party was also attended by a lot of important political representatives. He spent his last years drawing and painting until his death in 1914. As expressed in the obituary in *The Times*, Tenniel was able “to give expression to the joys and sorrows of his countrymen”³⁰⁴ and “to revolutionize political caricature” thus having an important impact and influence on the many comic periodicals of his age and beyond.

3.5.2 The *Alice* Books

In *Sir John Tenniel: Aspects of His Work*, Roger Simpson states that Tenniel plays a prominent role in the history of art not only because “he was the principal cartoonist on *Punch* through some of the most significant decades of British history”,³⁰⁵ but also because he was the illustrator of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice* books. Michael Hancher notices that all the reviews of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* which appeared on the most important periodicals and magazines soon after the publication, were focused on Tenniel’s illustrations. Hancher adds that only “in the last century Carroll’s fame as the author of the two *Alice* books has eclipsed that of his artist-collaborator.”³⁰⁶ The close connection between Carroll’s works and Tenniel’s illustrations is also pointed out by Hugh Haughton:

Though there have been numerous brilliant illustrators of the *Alice* books in the twentieth century – by among others, Arthur Rackham, Mervyn Peake, Salvador Dali, the Walt Disney studio and Ralph Steadman – Carroll’s text has remained indissolubly bound up with the original illustrations which appeared in all the texts published in his lifetime (with the exception of the 1886 facsimile of *Alice’s Adventures under Ground*). Tenniel’s illustrations form an inescapable complement and counterpart to Carroll’s dream text and to the reader’s sense of the squarely

³⁰⁴ “Death of Sir John Tenniel. - The Art of Caricature”. In *The Times*, February 27, 1914, p. 33. <http://www.newspapers.com/image/#497|32839121> (accessed February 28, 2014).

³⁰⁵ Simpson, Roger, *Sir John Tenniel: Aspects of His Work*, London, Associated University Press, 1994, p. 9.

³⁰⁶ Hancher, Michael, *The Tenniel Illustrations to the “Alice” Books*, Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1985, p. xv.

down-to-earth 'dream child' in her striped stockings and long brushed air, as well as her various fabulous and incongruous interlocutors in Wonderland and beyond the mirror.³⁰⁷

A few general considerations about the *Alice* books show that illustrating them was not such an easy task for Tenniel. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871) are in fact extremely complex. As the great part of children's books, they raise the question of the double reader: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* "originated as a children's story and was marketed as a book for children, yet since the first day of its publication it has always appealed to adults too."³⁰⁸ The same could be also said about *Through the Looking-Glass*. Children or adults, the readers of Carroll's texts can be generally divided into two groups: those who simply enjoy the stories and those who look for a specific meaning. According to Hugh Haughton, "these divergent approaches to reading the *Alice* books reflect something of the enigmatic or hybrid nature of the text itself".³⁰⁹ "What exactly are the 'Alice' books?",³¹⁰ asks Peter Hunt.

What gives them their global, perennial fascination? Are they harmless, innocent children's stories, simple fantasies with eccentric characters and nonsense verses? Or are they studies of Victorian female repression, stories that take place in nightmare worlds of aggression and godlessness, allegories of Victorian and Oxford society, intricate textures of mathematical, philosophical, and semantic puzzles, or symbolic explorations of 'some of the deepest existential problems in a light-hearted way'? Or gifts of love (or possibly lust) from a frustrated academic to a young girl?³¹¹

³⁰⁷ Haughton, Hugh, "A Note on Tenniel", in Carroll, Lewis, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, cit., pp. lxxv-lxxx, p. lxxix.

³⁰⁸ Haughton, Hugh, "Introduction", in Carroll, Lewis, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, cit., pp. ix-lxv, p. xii.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

³¹⁰ Hunt, Peter, "Introduction", in Carroll, Lewis, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* - Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Peter Hunt, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, vii-xliii, p. ix.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

Maybe the “hybrid nature of the text” is the reason why critics have always given different and often contrasting interpretations of Carroll’s works. As far as this topic is concerned, Roger Simpson believes that “it seems a pointless task to attempt any longer to speculate about the ‘meaning’ of the *Alice* books”³¹² also because critics tend to “remove them from their own social context.”³¹³ The risk is to go beyond the text, neglecting it and not considering that “the *Alice* books and their illustrations rely for virtually the whole of their substance upon two sources, both of which are purely popular in origin – gothic horror and satire.”³¹⁴ Indeed, also Hugh Haughton stresses the presence of grotesque and Gothic elements in Carroll’s texts when he says that “to read the *Alice* books is to plunge into a world of narrative distortions and nonsensical explanations”³¹⁵ and that, seen through the eyes of Alice, the adult world is “dismayingly bizarre and perverse.”³¹⁶

The fact that Carroll considered the illustrations as an integral part of his description of Wonderland is proved by two main elements:

- The manuscript he gave as a gift to Alice Liddell contained some drawings realised by Carroll himself, and this is an evident demonstration that Carroll conceived the text and the images as a whole since the very beginning;
- *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* opens with young Alice asking herself what is the use of a book without pictures or conversations.

Some time after having finished the manuscript for Alice Liddell, Carroll decided to have it published as a book. Since he did not feel too confident in his skills as a draftsman, he knew he needed a talented illustrator to realise the drawings of his book. He had a preference for Tenniel and we know from the letters written to his friend Tom Taylor, who was a *Punch* journalist, that Carroll asked his opinion about Tenniel, to understand if he was the right man for this task. Michael Hancher suggests that the choice of Tenniel was not so fortuitous and that there is a precise reason if his illustrations “have become

³¹² Simpson, Roger, *Sir John Tenniel: Aspects of His Work*, cit., p. 143.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

³¹⁵ Haughton, Hugh, “Introduction”, in Carroll, Lewis, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, cit., p. x.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

perfect mirror images of the world that Alice discovered down the rabbit hole and through the looking-glass”.³¹⁷ The reason can be found in the cartoons that Tenniel realised for *Punch*. Hancher, in fact, considers them as a sort of preview of Wonderland and of the world beyond the mirror.



Figure 79 - John Tenniel, 'Up a Tree': Colonel Bull and the Yankee Coon (*Punch*; January 1862)

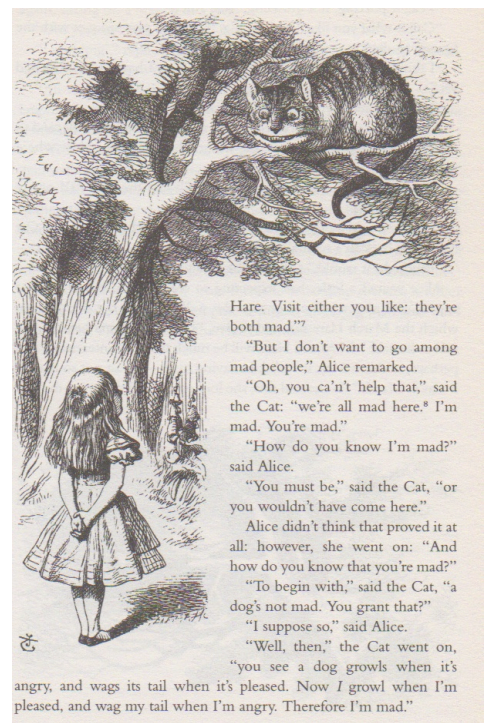


Figure 80 - John Tenniel, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)

Hare. Visit either you like: they're both mad."
"But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.
"Oh, you ca'n't help that," said the Cat: "we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad."
"How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice.
"You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here."
Alice didn't think that proved it at all: however, she went on: "And how do you know that you're mad?"
"To begin with," said the Cat, "a dog's not mad. You grant that?"
"I suppose so," said Alice.
"Well, then," the Cat went on, "you see a dog growls when it's angry, and wags its tail when it's pleased. Now *I* growl when I'm pleased, and wag my tail when I'm angry. Therefore I'm mad."

³¹⁷ Hancher, Michael, *The Tenniel Illustrations to the "Alice" Books*, cit., p. 3.



Figure 81 - John Tenniel, *Maniac March Hares* (*Punch*, Almanack for 1842)

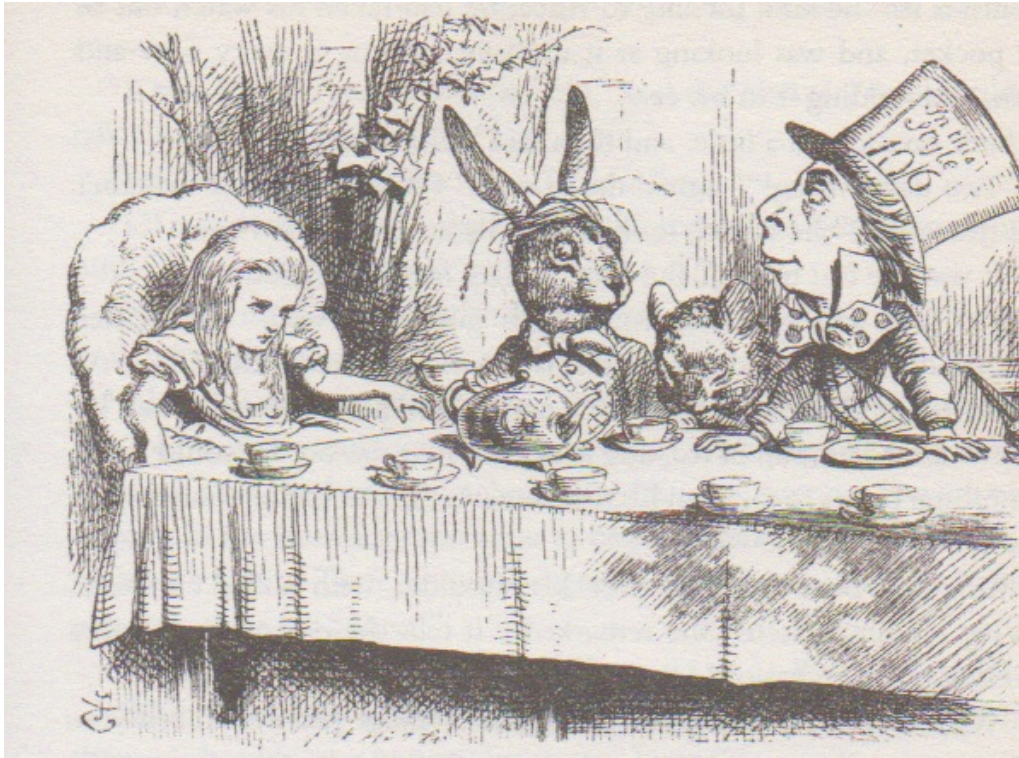


Figure 82 - John Tenniel, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)



Figure 83 - John Tenniel, *An eye like MARS* (*Punch*; September 1855)

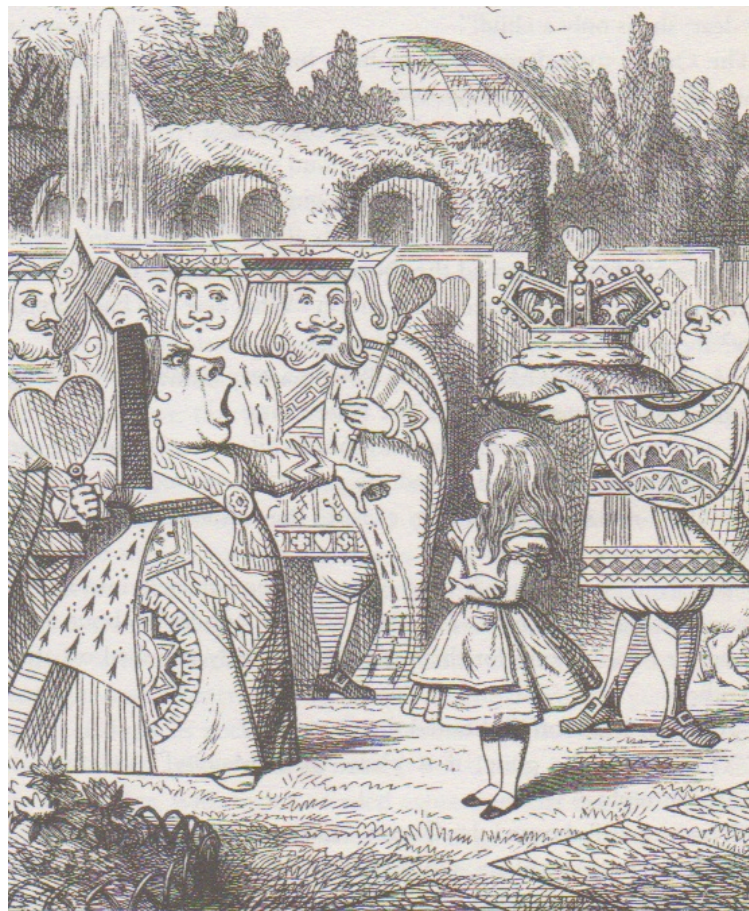


Figure 84 - John Tenniel,
*Alice's Adventures in
Wonderland* (1865)



Figure 85 - John Tenniel, *The Gigantic Gooseberry* (*Punch*; July 1871)



Figure 86 - John Tenniel, *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871)

In his cartoons Tenniel combined “a satiric fantasy style with a solid circumstantial grasp of the social and political details of the Victorian world”³¹⁸ and it is exactly for this reason that Carroll chose him.

It is relevant to observe that *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* differ from the other picturebooks so far analysed because here the author and the illustrator are not the same person. Maria Nikolajeva and Carol Scott notice that when in a picturebook the author and the illustrator work separately, this could cause a problem of ownership – with the readers asking themselves “Whose book is this?”³¹⁹ In addition to this, contradictions and discrepancies between the verbal and the visual text are likely to occur. Yet, this does not happen in the *Alice* books, in which the word-picture dynamic is symmetrical and enhancing. Tenniel, in fact “was respectful of his pictorial source as well as of the text he was illustrating.”³²⁰ No doubt having at his disposal the original illustrations realised by Carroll helped Tenniel to understand what kind of drawings he wanted and what passages had to be highlighted. This, however, did not prevent Tenniel from using his personal and original style and from making the changes he considered worthwhile.



Figure 87 - Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures under Ground* (1864)

³¹⁸ Houghton, Hugh, “A Note on Tenniel”, in Carroll, Lewis, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, cit., p. lxxviii.

³¹⁹ Nikolajeva, Maria, Scott, Carole, *How Picturebooks Work*, cit., p. 30.

³²⁰ Hancher, Michael, *The Tenniel Illustrations to the “Alice” Books*, cit., p. 34.

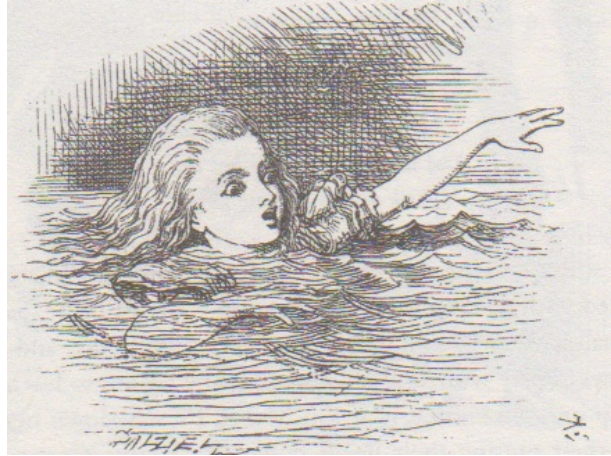


Figure 88 - John Tenniel, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)



Figure 89 - Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures under Ground* (1864)



Figure 90 - John Tenniel, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)



Figure 91 - Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures under Ground* (1864)



Figure 92 - John Tenniel, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)

Michael Hancher properly underlines that

Imitation always drifts and differs – a truism as old as Plato. It follows that no illustration can simply ‘reflect’ a text. But it does not follow that text and illustration are fundamentally at odds. Though an illustration cannot copy a text, it can – indeed, as an illustration it must – recreate part of the same world that the text creates.³²¹

Alice’s dream worlds were constructed by Carroll out of the details of Alice Liddell’s actual environment. As a consequence, Tenniel

Proved an inspired choice of illustrator for Alice and her world. His graphic idiom, however fantastic and allegorically grotesque, is as pedantically referential as an exhibition catalogue of Victorian social types, settings, furniture and costume – just like Dodgson’s own. When Alice travels underground and through the glass, it is not only her unconscious dream world that she finds – but Victorian England, and the world of the Oxford establishment she shared with Dodgson.³²²

³²¹ Hancher, Michael, *The Tenniel Illustrations to the “Alice” Books*, cit., p. 119.

³²² Haughton, Hugh, “Introduction”, in Carroll, Lewis, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, cit., pp. xlii-xliii.

3.6 Wilhelm Busch



Figure 93 - Wilhelm Busch

3.6.1 Life

Wilhelm Busch was born in 1832 in Wiedensahl, Germany, where his parents owned and managed the general local store. Wilhelm was the first of seven children and in 1841 he was sent to live with his uncle Georg Kleine because the Busch home was becoming too small for the growing family. Kleine, who was a clergyman at Ebergötzen, became the tutor of young Wilhelm. Busch was an avid reader and loved spending time at the Ebergötzen water mill. There he met Erich Bachmann, the son of the owner of the mill, and with him he started a close friendship which was to last until Bachmann's death.³²³

Wilhelm was meant to become a mechanical engineer and thanks to his uncle's private tutoring he entered the Hanover Polytechnic College. However, Busch found the engineering studies frustrating, and after three years he went to Düsseldorf to enrol in the local Art Academy in order to become a painter. He soon left it for the Royal Academy in Antwerp because he did not like the general approach to art that characterised the teaching method in Düsseldorf. A typhoid fever forced him to give up his studies for some time and when he decided to resume them, he went to the Royal Academy of Art in

³²³ Sources: Lotze, Dieter P., *Wilhelm Busch*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1979; *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Wilhelm Busch". <http://www.britannica.com/pros.lib.unimi.it/EBchecked/topic/86058/Wilhelm-Busch>. (accessed February 28, 2014).

Munich. In the meantime, he started contributing as a cartoonist to the satirical weekly magazine *Fliegende Blätter* (Flying Leaves or Loose Leaves) and to the journal *Münchener Bilderbogen* (Munich Picture Strips), both founded by Kaspar Braun.

From 1854 to 1869 Busch spent most of his time in Munich, but he regularly went to Wiedensahl and to Frankfurt, where his brother Otto had moved to become the private tutor of the children of the wealthy banker J.D.H. Kessler, with whom he started a lifelong friendship. In 1872 Busch settled his residence in Wiedensahl where he died in 1908.

3.6.2 Grotesque Picture Stories

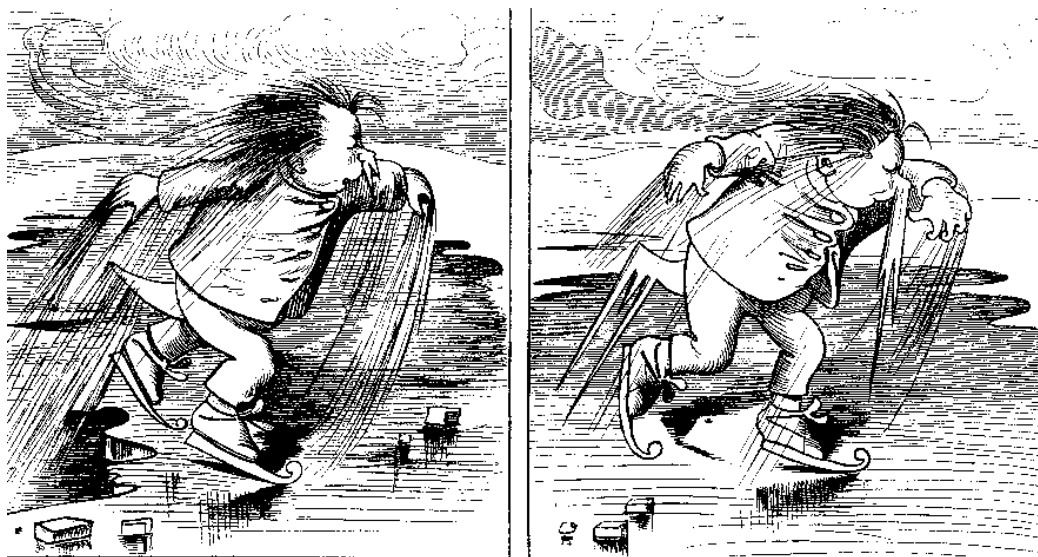
Apart from the cartoons realised for *Fliegende Blätter* and *Münchener Bilderbogen*, Busch also wrote and illustrated several tales for children. Some of them appeared in the *Münchener Bilderbogen*, while others were directly published in small collections. Although the number of tales written and illustrated by Busch was so huge that it could fill six volumes in a modern edition, only a small part was translated into English. In addition to this, Busch's name did not always appear in the translations of his works. Angelika Morris observes that Busch's reception has always been varied, and that only his death "opened up insights into his life and works that his contemporaries sorely lacked."³²⁴ At home his picture stories were famous but he was almost neglected by literary critics; abroad his works were quite well known, especially in North America because a huge number of European immigrants went there searching for a job.

In this paragraph I shall focus mainly on *Bilderpossen* and *Max und Moritz* because in these early picture stories it is possible to find all the main features that Busch will gradually develop and that will become the characterising elements of his style. *Bilderpossen* was first published in Dresden in 1864 by J. Heinrich Richter. Its first English translation, made by W. Harry Rogers, appeared in London four years later with the title *A Bushel of Merry-Thoughts* (1868). The publishing house was Sampson Low, Son &

³²⁴ Morris, Angelika, *Manifestations of Wilhelm Busch's Aesthetics in 'Eduards Traum'*, unpublished MA thesis, University of Ottawa, 1981, p. 36.

Marston.³²⁵ The collection included four stories: “The Fearful Tragedy of Ice Peter” (“Der Eispeter”), “The Terrible Punishment of the Naughty Boys of Corinth” (“Diogenes und die bösen Buben von Korinth”), “The Exciting Story of the Cat and the Mouse” (“Katse und Maus”), and “The Disobedient Children who Stole Sugar-Bread” (“Hänsel und Gretel”). Among these four stories “Der Eispeter” and “Hänsel und Gretel” are particularly interesting.

“The Fearful Story of Ice Peter” takes place during the really freezing winter of 1812. Despite the cold temperature, young Peter decides to go skating. He accidentally falls into the water but he is able to climb out of it. Unfortunately, it is so freezing that the cold water on his body starts to form spikes of ice and Peter is soon changed into an icy porcupine. His parents find him, take him home and put him in front of the stove. The ice starts to thaw but Peter melts away with it. The only thing that his parents can do is to pick up his remains into a jar and put it on a shelf between the cheese and the pickles containers.



Though small at first, there
quickly grows,
A long ice-pendant on his nose.

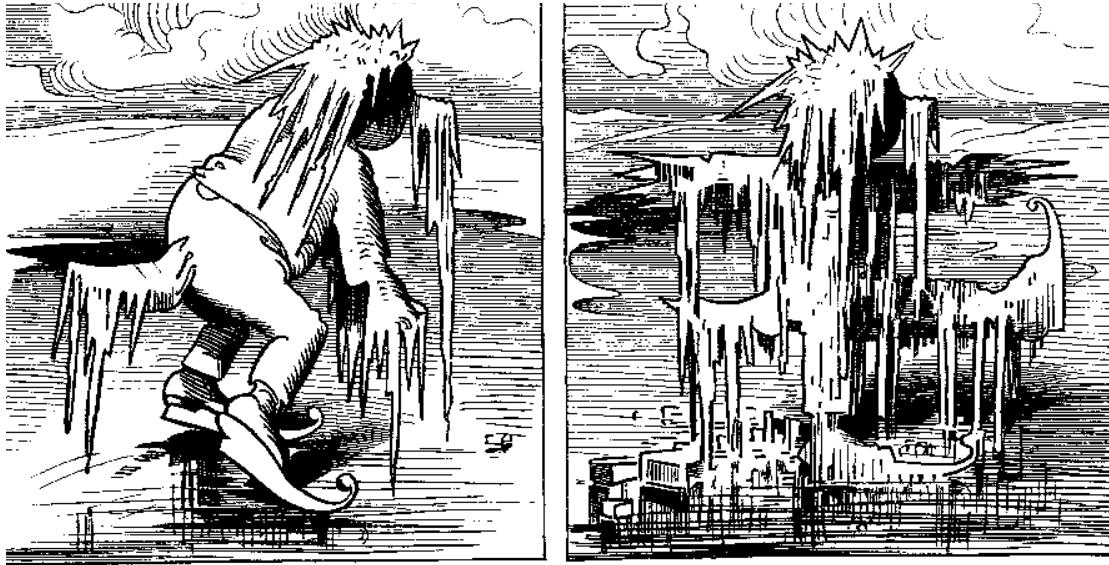
Which lengthens fast, till by my
life,
'Tis sharp as any butcher's knife!

Bald schießt hervor, obschon noch
klein,
Ein Zacken Eis am Nasenbein.

Der Zacken wird noch immer besser
Und scharf als wie ein
Schlachtermesser.

Figure 94 - Wilhelm Busch, *Der Eispeter* (1864)

³²⁵ Blamires, David, *Telling Tales: The Impact of Germany on English Children's Books 1780-1918*, cit., p. 346.



A mass of ice from head to toes,
He freezes faster as he goes.

Der Zacken werden immer mehr,
Der Nasenzacken wird ein Speer.

And each one asks; "Who can this
be?
'Tis a frozen porcupine I see?"

Und jeder fragt: Wer mag das sein?
Das ist ja ein gefrorenes
Stachelschwein!

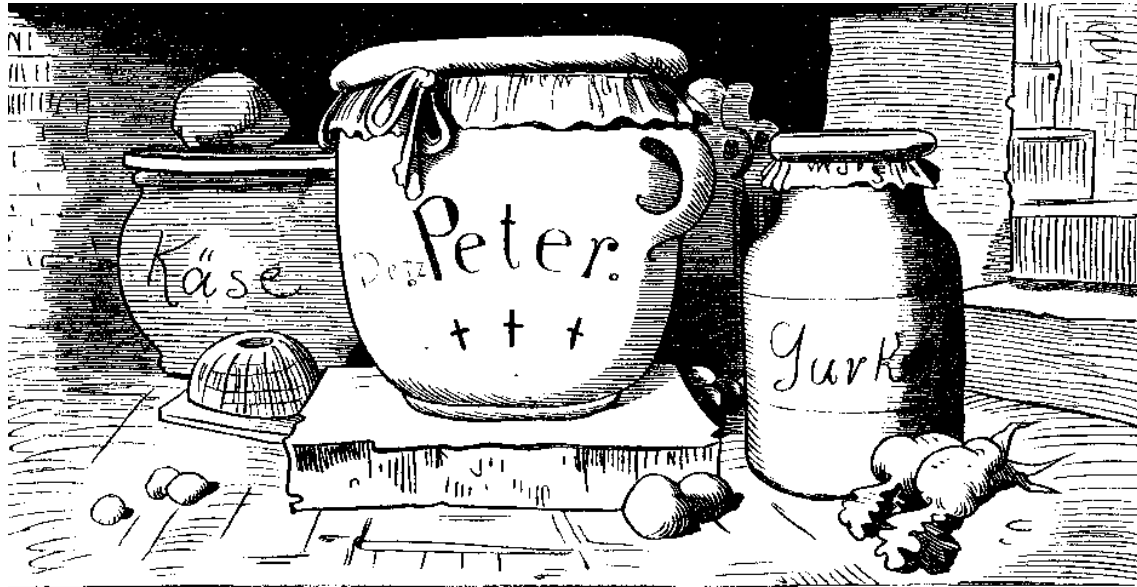
Figure 95 - Wilhelm Busch, *Der Eispeter* (1864)



Here in a pickle-jar inter they
Peter, of better burial worthy.

Hier wird in einem Topf gefüllt
Des Peters traurig Ebenbild.

Figure 96 - Wilhelm Busch, *Der Eispeter* (1864)



**Yes, yes! within this earthen jar,
Poor Pete's remains preserved are.**

**Ja, ja! in diesem Topf aus Stein,
Da machte man den Peter ein,**

**The rebel, who at first was hard,
As soft as butter now, is jarred.**

**Der, nachdem er anfangs hart,
Später weich wie Butter ward.**

Figure 97 - Wilhelm Busch, *Der Eispeter* (1864)

Even if the English title is misleading, “The Disobedient Children who Stole Sugar-Bread”³²⁶ is actually Busch’s adaptation of “Hänsel und Gretel”. There are some differences between the story written by Busch and the original fairy-tale by the Grimms:

- The witch here is not alone but she is helped by her husband, who is an ogre;
- It is Hänsel who kills the witch while in the original fairy-tale the leading role belonged to Gretel;
- The tale does not end with the traditional tearful reunion scene but with Hänsel and Gretel’s mother who is waiting for them with the rod. In fact, they have disobeyed her by going into the wood.

³²⁶ The title refers to the “brezeln” that the young protagonists eat on their way back home after having escaped from the witch and the ogre.



Und Hans und Gretel, ach, o Graus!
Schleppt man bis in das Hexenhaus.

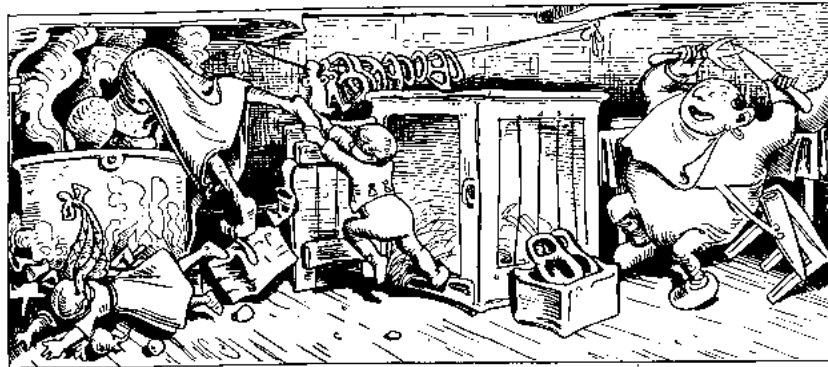


Die Hexe macht das Feuer an,
Daß sie die Kinder kochen kann.

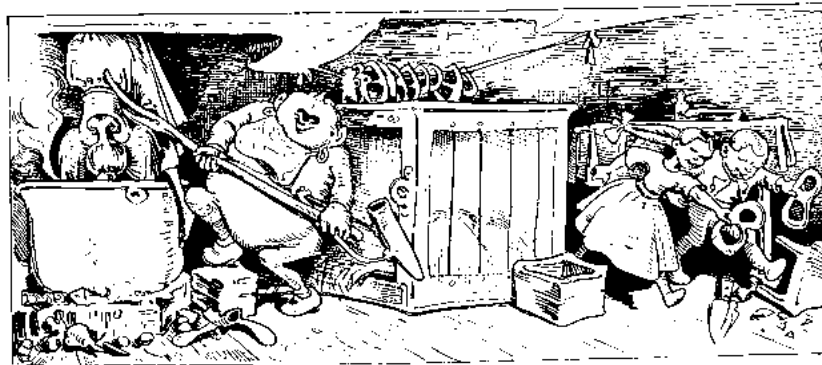


Am Tisch der dicke Bösewicht,
Der paßt schon auf sein Leibgericht.

Figure 98 - Wilhelm Busch, *Hänsel und Gretel* (1864)

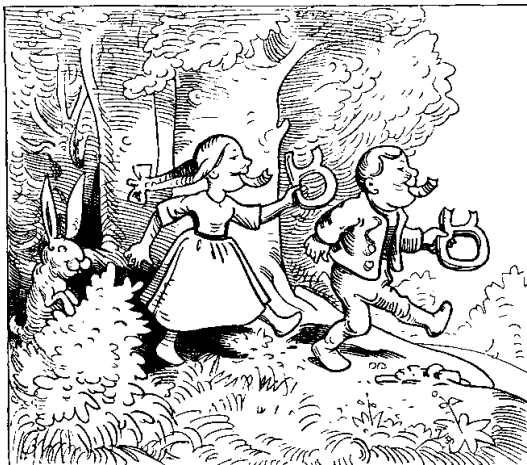


Doch Hänsel faßt die Hex' am Bein,
Plumps! fällt sie in den Topf hinein.

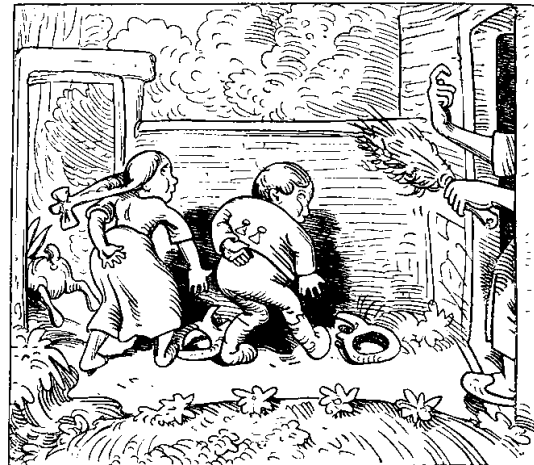


Die Hexe kriegte ihren Lohn,
Tot hängt sie an der Gabel schon.

Figure 99 - Wilhelm Busch, *Hänsel und Gretel* (1864)



Jetzt gehn die zwei zum Wald hinaus,
Die Mutter schaut schon aus dem Haus;



Sie winkt und läßt die Rute sehn:
Na, gute Nacht! Da dank' ich schön!

Figure 100 - Wilhelm Busch, *Hänsel und Gretel* (1864)

According to Dieter P. Lotze, both the collection *Bilderpossen*, and especially “Der Eispeter” and “Hänsel und Gretel”, provide evidence that the world of Busch’s stories is definitely grotesque. The grotesque which Lotze refers to is the one described by Kayser. Lotze chiefly focuses on Kayser’s definitions of the grotesque as “the estranged world” and “a play with the absurd.”³²⁷ Kayser believes that there is the grotesque whenever “something which is familiar and trusted is suddenly made strange and disturbing”,³²⁸ and Lotze notices that in Busch’s tales this is due to the presence of malicious objects:

This is the world described by Busch, where puffs of wind, holes in the ice, and sharp edges are just waiting for a moment of inattention in order to cause the greatest possible damage. His picture stories are filled with malicious objects: pointed knives and sharp forks ready to pierce various parts of the human anatomy, watering cans and other vessels patiently standing in the appropriate spot until they can spill their contents over somebody, ovens and candles waiting in ambush for a person who could be burned, and many similar elements.³²⁹

Lotze thinks that “Busch tried to employ laughter as a way to cope with the realization of the continuous treat posed by our hostile surroundings”,³³⁰ thus perfectly representing Kayser’s final interpretation of the grotesque, that is “an attempt to invoke and subdue the demonic aspects of the world.”³³¹

Also the stories in *Bilderpossen* in a sense belong to the tradition of the cautionary tales that we have mentioned when speaking about Hoffmann’s *Struwwelpeter*.³³² Katrien Vloeberghs defines them “intimidation stories”,³³³ that is, tales in which “disobedient children experience a cruel but justified punishment.”³³⁴ However, Busch further developed “the theme of ‘bad boys’ who act mischievously for no apparent external

³²⁷ Cfr. p. 49.

³²⁸ Kayser, Wolfgang, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, cit., p. 185.

³²⁹ Lotze, Dieter P., *Wilhelm Busch*, cit. pp. 25-26.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

³³¹ Kayser, Wolfgang, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, cit., p. 188.

³³² Cfr. par. 3.2.2.

³³³ Vloeberghs, Katrien, “Trickster as Figure and Force: Ambivalence in Busch’s and Hoffmann’s picture-books”, in *German as a Foreign Language*, 2/2002, pp. 56-65, p. 58.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

reason”³³⁵ in his second book *Max und Moritz. Eine Bubengeschichte in sieben Streichen*. It was published in Munich in 1865 by Braun and Schneider. The first English translation was actually an American edition. The translator was Charles T. Brooks and the work was published in Boston in 1871 by Roberts Brothers with the title *Max and Maurice. A Juvenile History in Seven Tricks*. As in *A Bushel of Merry-Thoughts*, the book maintained the original illustrations realised by Busch. The only difference was in the colour, because the original drawings were coloured while in the American edition they were reproduced in black and white. According to David Blamires this was not a great loss because “Busch’s emphasis was on line rather than colour.”³³⁶ The book describes a sequence of seven tricks which the two protagonists, Max and Moritz, play on various people in their village. In the first two tricks they kill and steal Widow Bolte’s hens and cock. Then they lure Tailor Böck on to a footbridge and make him fall into the water. In the fourth and the fifth tricks they fill the pipe of Schoolmaster Lämper with gunpowder and put bugs into the bed of Uncle Fritz. In the sixth trick a sort of change occurs. Max and Moritz fall down the baker’s chimney because they want to steal some biscuits. The baker discovers them, makes them into huge loaves and bakes them in the oven. Fortunately the boys survive and eat themselves out of the bread. In the last trick Farmer Mecke catches Max and Moritz in the act of cutting the sacks containing the corn. He takes them to the mill where they are ground into little pieces thus becoming chickenfeed.

³³⁵ Lotze, Dieter P., *Wilhelm Busch*, cit. p. 32.

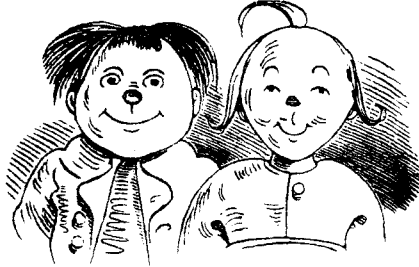
³³⁶ Blamires, David, *Telling Tales: The Impact of Germany on English Children’s Books 1780-1918*, cit., p. 346.

Preface

Ah, how oft we read or hear of
Boys we almost stand in fear of!
For example, take these stories

Vorwort

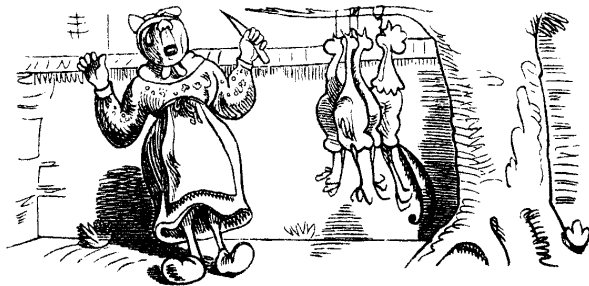
Ach, was muß man oft von bösen
Kindern hören oder lesen!!
Wie zum Beispiel hier von diesen,



Of two youths, named Max and
Moritz,

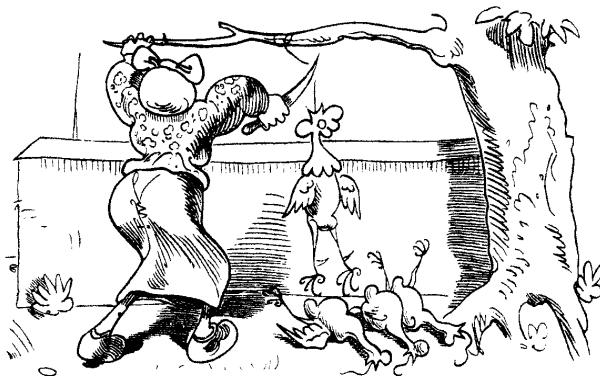
Welche Max und Moritz hießen;

Figure 101 - Wilhelm Busch, *Max und
Moritz* (1865)



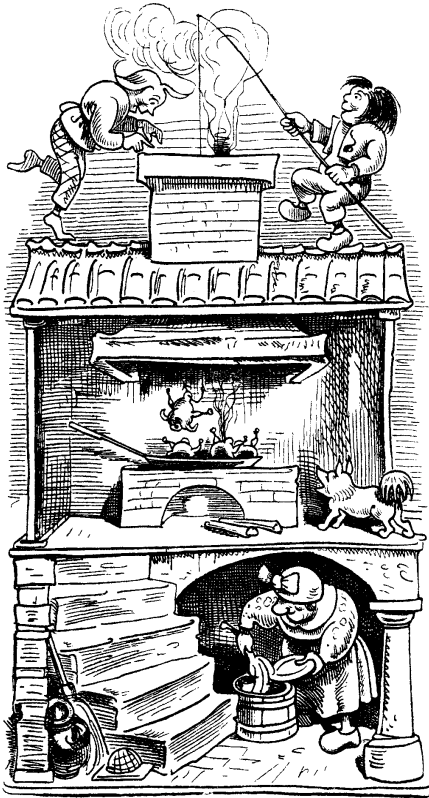
From her eyes the tears are
streaming:
"Oh, my cares, my toil, my
dreaming!
Ah, life's fairest hope," says she,
"Hangs upon that apple-tree."

„Fließet aus dem Aug', ihr
Tränen!
All mein Hoffen, all mein Sehnen,
Meines Lebens schönster Traum
Hängt an diesem Apfelbaum!!“



Heart-sick (you may well suppose),
For the carving-knife she goes;
Cuts the bodies from the bough,
Hanging cold and lifeless now;

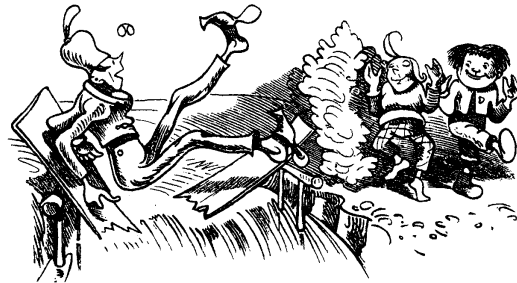
Tiefbetrübt und sorgenschwer
Kriegt sie jetzt das Messer her;
Nimmt die Toten von den Strängen
Daß sie so nicht länger hängen,



Schnupdiwup! there goes, O
Jeminy!
One hen dangling up the chimney.

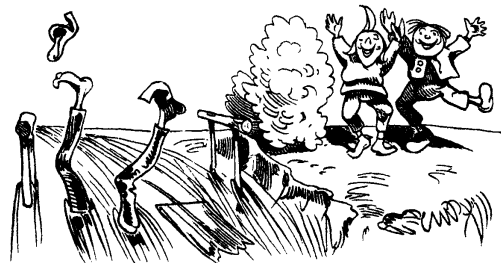
Schnupdiwup! da wird nach oben
Schon ein Huhn heraufgehoben.

Figure 102 - Wilhelm Busch, *Max und Moritz*
(1865)



On the bridge one leap he makes;
Crash! beneath his weight it breaks.

Und schon ist er auf der Brücke,
Kracks! die Brücke bricht in
Stücke;



Once more rings the cry, "Muck!
muck!"
/n, headforemost, plumps poor
Buck!

Wieder tönt es: „Meck, meck,
meck!“
Plumps! Da ist der Schneider we

These bad boys, for mischief ready,
Stole into the good man's study,
Where his darling meerschaum
stands.
This, Max holds in both his hands;

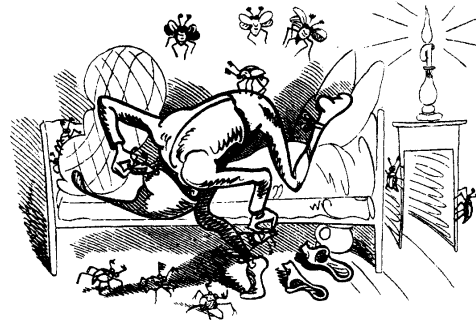
Schlichen sich die bösen Buben
In sein Haus und seine Stuben,
Wo die Meerschaumpfeife stand;
Max hält sie in seiner Hand;



While young Moritz (scapegrace
born!)
Climbs, and gets the powderhorn,
And with speed the wicked soul
Pours the powder in the bowl.
Hush, and quick! now, right about!
For already church is out.

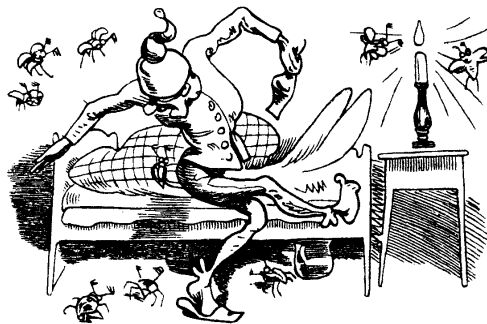
Aber Moritz aus der Tasche
Zieht die Flintenpulverflasche,
Und geschwinde, stopf, stopf,
stopf!
Pulver in den Pfeifenkopf. –
Jetzt nur still und schnell nach
Haus,
Denn schon ist die Kirche aus. –

Figure 103 - Wilhelm Busch, *Max und Moritz*
(1865)



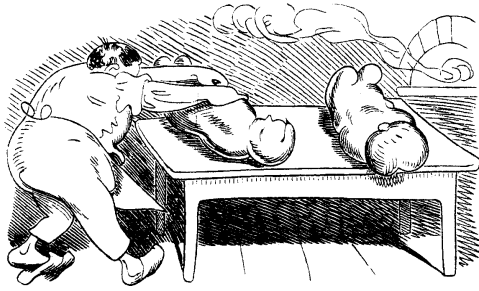
„Autsch!“ he seizes two more
scape-
Graces from his shin and nape.

„Autsch!“ – Schon wieder ha-
einen
Im Genicke, an den Beinen;



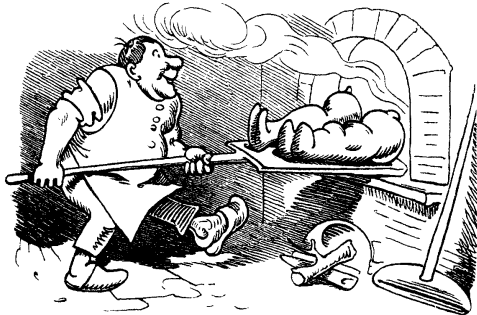
Crawling, flying, to and fro,
Round the buzzing rascals go.

Hin und her und rund herum
Kriecht es, fliegt es mit Gebur-



One, two, three! the brats, behold!
Into two good *brots* are rolled.

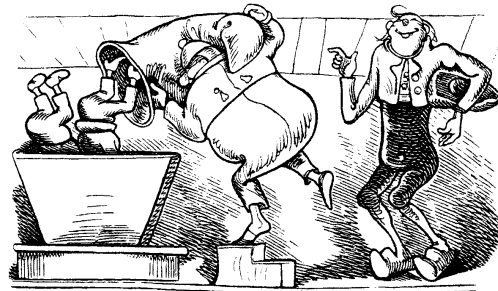
Eins, zwei, drei! – eh' man's
gedacht,
Sind zwei Brote draus gemacht.



There's the oven, all red-hot,—
Shove 'em in as quick as thought.

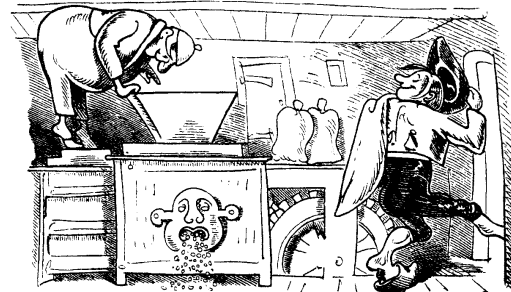
In dem Ofen glüht es noch
Ruff!! – damit ins Ofenloch!

Figure 104 - Wilhelm Busch, *Max und Moritz*
(1865)



"In with 'em!" Each wretched
flopper
Headlong goes into the hopper.

„Her damit!!“ Und in den Trichter
Schüttelt er die Bösewichter. –



As the farmer turns his back, he
Hears the mill go "creaky!
cracky!"

Rickeracke! Rickeracke!
Geht die MÜhle mit Geknacke.

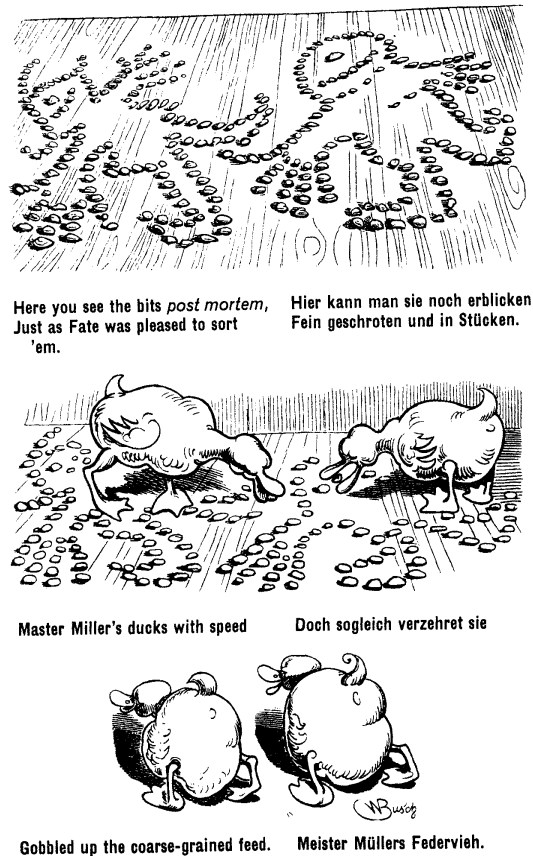


Figure 105 - Wilhelm Busch, *Max und Moritz* (1865)

The plot is characterised by a circular pattern – in the first trick Max and Moritz kill Widow Bolte’s hens and eventually they are eaten by the miller’s fowls – which will be present in all the following stories written by Busch. The book also shows the author’s view of children. Busch, in fact, did not believe in their natural innocence and in the education as a cure of all evils. As a consequence, his tales do not have the didactic aim that it is possible to find in Hoffmann’s *Struwwelpeter*. Busch clearly explained his idea of children in a letter to Maria Anderson, who had previously sent him a pamphlet against hunting:

Your premise: “the unspoiled human being inherently experiences and unpleasant feeling whenever his fellow beings suffer” is wrong because it is *one-sided*. Suffering and torture rather exert a *frightful attraction*, causing horror and delight at the same time. – Have you ever noticed the expression of children watching a pig being slaughtered? ... *Death, cruelty, lust* – here they are all together ... When we are born,

we are received by the good demon and by the evil demon who want to accompany us. The evil demon is usually the stronger and the *healthier* one; it is the vital instinct. But the good demon *beckons to return*, and *good* children die early, their angel's wings have not been clipped off. – In short, the natural, unspoiled (?) human being, that is in particular the child, has to be predominantly evil, otherwise he cannot survive in this world.³³⁷

Busch's 'dark' idea of the child could be the reason why in his picture stories also young girls rebel against authority. According to Joan Elizabeth Gladwell, this vision is connected to Bakhtin's carnivalesque because a world turned upside down is the result of the mischief done by the young protagonists of Busch's picture stories.³³⁸

As far as the illustrations are concerned, in *Bilderpossen* and *Max und Moritz* Busch used a technique which he adopted also for the following books and which contributed to consider him as the forefather of the comic strip:

the drawing were done in strips, one after the other, and were cut out and pasted on a sheet, mostly in pairs. The verses were then added, an organic unity being aimed at in the combination of the simple, round, expressive strokes of the drawings and the round calligraphy.³³⁹

It may be suggested that, since Busch realised the illustrations first, the pictures mainly convey the story. However, Busch conceived his picture-tales as a whole and the text-image dynamic in his books is absolutely symmetrical and enhancing. As observed by Osbert Lancaster, the works by Wilhelm Busch are a perfect example that "drawing is just another form of handwriting."³⁴⁰

³³⁷ Bohne, Friedrich, *Sämtliche Briefe: Kommentierte Ausgabe*, Hanover, Wilhelm-Busch-Gesellschaft, 1968-69, 2 vols., in Lotze, Dieter P., *Wilhelm Busch*, cit. p. 33.

³³⁸ Gladwell, Joan Elizabeth, *Wilhelm Busch: The Art of Letting Off Steam Through Symbolic Inversion*, unpublished MA thesis, Queen's University, 2013, p. 68.

³³⁹ Wild, Doris, "Wilhelm Busch: On the Genesis of His Picture-Stories", in *Graphis*, 29 1950, pp. 83-85, p. 84.

³⁴⁰ Lancaster, Osbert, "The Work of Wilhelm Busch", in *Lilliput Magazine*, April 1943, pp. 315-319, p. 319.