

= Mission : Earth , Voyage to the Home Planet =

Mission : Earth , Voyage to the Home Planet is a children 's literature book by science writer June A. English and astronaut Thomas David Jones that was published in 1996 by Scholastic . Jones was among the crew members of the Space Shuttle Endeavour during an eleven @-@ day mission in space , which was launched in April 1994 to study the ecological well @-@ being of Earth using specialized radar technology . The book , which is illustrated with radar images and picturesque photographs , chronicles the mission and Jones ' experiences of it .

Mission : Earth , Voyage to the Home Planet received a generally favorable reception in media coverage and book reviewers . The Pittsburgh Post @-@ Gazette said , " The authors convey the awe and wonderment of seeing Earth from space and the intricate delicacy of the Earth 's ecology " . The Dallas Morning News said , " The astronaut 's descriptions are vivid " . A review in Booklist was more critical ; it said , " The authors try to cover too much in so few pages , and the narrative , with several focal points , becomes simplified at times " . School Library Journal wrote , " It provides a unique look at a new method of research and an opportunity for youngsters to read one scientist 's account of what it 's like to engage in this exciting field of endeavor " . The book was selected for inclusion in books Best Books for Children , and Adventuring With Books , or educating youths about history by using children 's literature works .

= = Background = =

June A. English is an author who specializes in science writing . She has published works within the genre of children 's literature .

Thomas David Jones was a member of the United States Air Force prior to working for NASA . As Jones was a United States federal employee at the time of the book 's publication , he did not receive profits from sales of the work . English and Jones later produced another collaborative work , Scholastic Encyclopedia of the United States at War , which was published in 1998 . Jones wrote another book about his experiences in space , Sky Walking : An Astronaut 's Memoir , which was published in 2006 .

= = Contents = =

In Mission : Earth , Voyage to the Home Planet , astronaut Thomas David Jones recounts his experiences studying the Earth during his first mission with the United States space agency NASA . Jones ' space mission lasted eleven days . Jones was a member of the crew of the Space Shuttle Endeavour , which left Earth in April 1994 . The mission was intended to provide the Space Radar Lab with a view of the planet . By using three separate radar echoes , scientists were able to analyze a full image of the planet . The radar technology could penetrate obstructions , including clouds and thick outgrowth of trees . Another purpose of the mission was to analyze the ecological state of the planet and to take measurements of pollution caused by carbon monoxide .

The book is based upon journal entries written by Jones during the mission . He presents a typical NASA mission member 's day @-@ to @-@ day experiences while living on the space shuttle . Jones illustrates his account with photographs from his mission and pictures from the radar capture . He describes his observations while looking at the Earth from space , for example he says , " Maybe more than any other sight from space , lightning gives the decided impression that the Earth is alive , a living organism " . He described aurora phenomena as , " shimmering fingers of green light reaching up from the dark ocean , an arc of light around the South Magnetic Pole " . June English provides contextual information about Jones ' mission .

= = Reception = =

Mission : Earth , Voyage to the Home Planet received a positive review from journalist Rebecca O 'Connell , who wrote in the Pittsburgh Post @-@ Gazette , " The authors convey the awe and

wonderment of seeing Earth from space and the intricate delicacy of the Earth 's ecology " . She said of the descriptive nature of the text , " Their descriptions of scientific phenomena read like revelations of mystic wonders . But this is not to say it is ponderous , not at all . " O 'Connell 's review concluded , " The text is packed with fascinating information and humorous touches . Even children who are not ordinarily interested in space or ecology will be interested in this book , and aficionados will go ga @-@ ga . " Leigh Fenly of The San Diego Union @-@ Tribune recommended the book , and said , " Science writer June English tracked the launch and adds perspective on how the mission will help scientists understand Earth , including its atmosphere , geology , ecology ? and future " . Nita Thurman wrote for The Dallas Morning News , " Mission : Earth , A Journey to the Home Planet has dozens of color photos taken inside the shuttle and through its windows . The astronaut 's descriptions are vivid . " Publishers Weekly wrote favorably of the book , saying , " Astronaut Jones 's enthusiasm for his work is contagious ; it shines through the text , making for a roundly enjoyable and informative read " . Publishers Weekly recommended the book and said it is , " [w] ell @-@ conceived and thoughtfully executed , this book deserves a wide audience . "

A review of the book by Ilana Steinhorn in Booklist was more critical . Steinhorn said , " The authors try to cover too much in so few pages , and the narrative , with several focal points , becomes simplified at times ... Still , the account is interesting , and the many high @-@ quality , often breathtaking color photographs and radar images complement the text nicely " . Elaine Fort Weischedel reviewed the book for School Library Journal , and recommended it for teaching specific subject matter . She wrote , " Pollution patterns , shifting ocean currents , destruction of rain forests , and other environmental changes were the heart of Jones 's project , and this book might be used more successfully to supplement the curriculum in those areas than in units on space flight per se " . Weischedel said the book " provides a unique look at a new method of research and an opportunity for youngsters to read one scientist 's account of what it 's like to engage in this exciting field of endeavor " . Horn Book Review called the book " a uniquely personal account " , and said it " features a crowded design , but the many color photographs throughout the text are fascinating " .

Mission : Earth , Voyage to the Home Planet is listed in the book Teaching U.S. history through children 's literature : post @-@ World War II by Wanda J. Miller as a resource for educating youth about history by using children 's literature works . It is used in other such books , including Strategies That Work : Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis , Reading Comprehension : Books and Strategies for the Elementary Curriculum by Kathryn K. Matthew and Kimberly Kimbell @-@ Lopez , and An Integrated Language Perspective in the Elementary School : An Action Approach by Christine Pappas , Barbara Zulantz Kiefer , and Linda S. Levstik . It was selected for inclusion in Best Books for Children by John Thomas Gillespie , and Adventuring With Books by Kathryn Mitchell Pierce .