

Freud in Oz

What might I mean by “Freud in Oz?” It’s easy enough to imagine the distinguished founder of psychoanalysis riding out that fierce tornado in lieu of Dorothy, snug inside the farmhouse and chuckling at the transformation of Miss Gulch into the Wicked Witch. After a rough landing, Freud would emerge into Technicolor sunshine and, taking a drag on his cigar, say to his beloved Chow, “I don’t think we’re in Vienna anymore.” Strolling among the Munchins, he would smile at their giant lollipops and arch an eyebrow at the curled toes of the “really most sincerely dead” Wicked Witch of the East. He’d need no help from Glinda in finding the royal road to the unconscious – made of yellow brick, of course. New friends in tow, he’d follow that road right into the Emerald City, where he’d put the Wizard in his place.

And yet, unlike Dorothy, Freud is no innocent abroad, so perhaps that scenario doesn’t quite work. Maybe Freud is the Wizard, having blown into Oz in a hot-air balloon and set himself up as ruler by way of fierce theatricals. This second scenario fits nicely with an existing view of Freud as charlatan and deluder of the masses – or (in a variation on that theme) as “a very good man but a very bad wizard.” There are perhaps as many ways to cast Freud in Oz as there are Oz stories already in existence – there are hundreds if not thousands of Oz extensions, continuations, revisions, and free associations, on paper, stage, and screen. Freud could have any number of adventures inside and outside of Oz.

Today I want the phrase “Freud in Oz” to suggest the presence of psychoanalysis in the (poppy?) field of children’s literature. What does the thing we call “psychoanalysis” have to do with the thing we call “children’s literature”? Or more precisely, what have their relations been, what are their relations now, and what might they be in the future? It seems obvious that certain strains of psychoanalysis have taken an interest in certain narrative forms that we think of as

belonging to childhood and children, especially the fairy tale. At first glance, the relationship looks more one-way than not, with psychoanalysis providing an interpretive framework for understanding the dynamics of text and/or author. Psychoanalytic readings of children's literature go back a ways but have proliferated since the 1980s. For the most part, psychoanalysis has been understood as a critical rather than a literary discourse and thus given interpretive authority over children's literature, even when sympathetic to its aims and ends.

But there's more to the story of psychoanalysis and children's literature. Alongside "Freud in Oz" I want us also to think about the reverse, "Oz in Freud," or the presence of children's literature in the field of psychoanalysis. It's true that most children's authors don't appeal explicitly to psychoanalytic concepts or conceits, so it wouldn't seem that creative writers use psychoanalysis in the way that some psychoanalysts use children's texts. But as Freud often acknowledged, literature was already dealing in psychological matters before psychoanalysis arrived on the scene. Freud himself was much indebted to literature, citing and borrowing from English and European masterworks of drama, poetry, and fiction. Psychoanalysis is a deeply literary enterprise. Freud noted that his case studies of hysteria seemed rather like short stories, and he credited poets especially with understanding intuitively what he labored to grasp intellectually. And while Freud didn't appropriate children's literature per se – in part because it had yet to be broadly understood as a cultural field – he did appropriate a key genre of children's literature, the fairy tale, for psychoanalytic purposes. In the context of an analysis of *Peter Pan*, Michael Egan claims that "The serious study of children's literature may said to have began with Freud, who found in folk and fairy tales evidence supporting his theory of the unconscious." Although Freud did not recognize the picturebook as a literary genre, much less think about how

to appropriate it, he did refer to specific pictures and picturebooks in his case histories and was an early theorist of what's now called picture theory.

So my talk today is about both "Freud in Oz" and "Oz in Freud." I'm interested in how psychoanalysis became part of children's literature and its professional criticism, but also in how certain genres of children's literature played a role in the development and dissemination of psychoanalysis and its variants. Additionally, I suggest that because children's literature is now firmly linked with psychodynamic theories of development, the best authors and illustrators tend to accrue something like psychological expertise – precisely through their creative or intuitive rather than clinical approach to the psyche and its discontents. Simply put, not only have psychoanalysis and children's literature influenced one another – children's literature is now often understood as psychological and even therapeutic work undertaken on behalf of the child subject. In what follows, I'll focus my remarks on fairy tales, picturebooks, and (more briefly) so-called golden-age fantasy narrative. The bad news is that this paper isn't really about Oz.

We'll start with the fairy tale. If the study of children's literature began with Freud, as Egan claims, that's because folk and fairy tales are assumed to be "children's literature" – an assumption that dates back at least to the eighteenth century. While Freud said nothing about children's literature as such, he made repeated references to fairy tales in his essays and case studies, sometimes in passing and sometimes in connection to particular childhood memories and associations. His 1913 paper "The Occurrence in Dreams of Material from Fairy Tales," for instance, tells the story of a patient who dreamed of Rumpelstiltskin, and both "Little Red Riding Hood" and "The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats" are pivotal to the famous Wolf Man case of 1918. Freud's patients often mentioned fairy tales in their analysis. Fairy-tales, Freud points out, often serve as screen-memories, distorting and sometimes replacing charged memories from

childhood. The interpretation of fairy tales became for Freud and his followers an important component of their practice. “Actually,” notes Freudian folklore scholar Alan Dundes, “almost every single major psychoanalyst wrote at least one paper applying psychoanalytic theory to folklore” (21). This was particularly true of the first generation of analysts – the list includes Karl Abraham, Ernest Jones, Otto Rank, Carl Jung, and Franz Ricklin – the last of whom published a book-length study of fairy tales as wish-fulfillment in 1915, some sixty years before Bruno Bettelheim took up the subject. Moreover, some of this literature (much of it in German) focused on the child audience for fairy tales.

In the nineteenth century, in and around European nation-building, scholars already thought of folktales as belonging to and thus reflecting the psyches of the people – the folk. Mythic and anthropological conceptions of the fairy tale echoed the evolutionary doctrines of the day, linking folk and fairy tales to ostensibly primitive levels of individual and group development. In *Volkerpsychologie* (*Folk Psychology*, 1900-1909), the German psychologist Wilhelm Wundt declared “that the fairy tale is the oldest of all narrative forms and reveals fundamental aspects of the primitive mind.” Psychoanalysis inherited and reworked this idea that folklore furnishes insight into the primitive mind. Throughout his work, Freud sees parallels among primitive people, children, and young nations, likening folklore to children’s “researches” and to national myths and legends. Fairytales were psychoanalytic readymades of a sort. Whereas contemporary scholars see fairy tales as setting standards for civilization (Zipes), or cultivating a pedagogy of fear (Warner), or otherwise functioning as a disciplinary discourse, Freud and crew found fairy tales to be illustrations of psychodynamic processes and correspondences.

At the same time, folklore and fairy tales provided a common cultural reference point for Freud and his patients. Freud recognized that fairy tales as a vital part of childhood experience

but also sought to capitalize on their popularity. As Dundes shows, Freud didn't just encourage the analysis of folktales – he actively sought out folklorists who could validate psychoanalysis through applied analysis of folklore. Much has been made of Freud's training in classical literature and his use of classical drama to illustrate his theories – most centrally, the borrowing of Oedipus from Sophocles. Sarah Winters argues persuasively that Freud situated psychoanalysis within the highbrow male homosocial curriculum of European education, thereby appealing to educated men of letters and science. In short, she suggests that Freud turned his own writings into instant classics of a sort, channeling if significantly revising the wisdom of the ancients – hence the “classical” status of the Freudian canon, which furnishes a baseline for psychoanalysis.¹ But alongside this highbrow and largely “tragic” literary tradition Freud also mobilized the lowbrow and often comic tradition of folk and fairy tales. The story of Oedipus, of course, was a folktale before it became a play, and in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Oedipus is one of many figures dramatizing psychic life. In fact, Oedipus appears in a section on “typical dreams” just after a discussion of Hans Christian Anderson's fairy tale “The Emperor's New Clothes,” which Freud reads as an expression of exhibitory wish-fulfillment rather than as an allegory about truth. There Freud also notes that the connections between typical dreams and classic fairy tales “are neither few nor accidental” (279).

Additionally, the transformation of folklore into fairytales set a methodological example for psychoanalytic casework. Whereas the case histories of sexology and psychiatry were diagnostic in more typically scientific ways, Freud approached the case history an attempt to capture and dramatize the story of psychological turmoil and of patient-doctor relations. In Freud's hands, the case history is at once a transcript of oral sessions and a work of literature, carefully crafted, beautifully written, and often enigmatic. Literary fairy tales, of course, are shorter and less

complex than Freud's case histories, but as Adam Grolnick writes, psychoanalysis "stands within the folkloristic tradition. The patient and the analyst tell and retell, interpret and reinterpret the story of the patient. Oral tradition prevails until, in the fashion of Perrault or Grimm, the decision is made to write up and publish a case report" (212).

To the extent that psychoanalysis "stands within the folkloristic tradition," then, we may say that psychoanalysis is part of what we call children's literature and has even been informed by such. If analysts and therapists continue to use folklore and fairy tales in their theoretical and clinical work, folklore and fairy tales continue to set some imaginative and performative parameters for psychoanalysis. A more detailed study along these lines would start with Freud and the classical tradition and move through subsequent psychoanalytic and psychological fields – ego psychology, object relations, Lacanian analysis, etc. – with an eye toward the uses of enchantment for psychological work as such. Whether or not the idea of "children's literature" is sufficient to or helpful with that task remains to be seen. We may need to keep a very open mind about what counts as children's literature and what counts as psychoanalysis.

In terms of chronology, our next stop should be golden-age fantasy literature but I'm going to skip ahead to the picturebook, which emerges as a genre in the wake of a broader fascination with visual culture and imagetext production. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud describes the dream-content as a "pictographic script" and a "picture puzzle," but for him the picturebook is a visual stimulus rather than a genre or subject of study. In his case studies, he does make occasional references to picturebooks, usually renditions of classic fairytales, as in the Wolf Man case. The Wolf Man recalls being terrified in early childhood by an illustration of an upright and menacing wolf, from a picturebook version of either "Little Red Riding Hood" or "The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats." In a recent interpretation of the Wolf Man case history, art historian

Whitney Davis discovers a picture behind the case's featured picture – one that made quite an impression on Freud as a child. The source text was Friedrich von Tschudi's *Animal Life in the Alpine World* (1865), the illustration an image of a menacing-looking rescue dog searching for a little boy lost in the snow (Davis 200-1). Citing this and other evidence, Davis suggests that Freud brought to the case his own childhood memories – in this case, a picture that riveted him as a young boy. Freud, Davis concludes, needed and used the Wolf Man just as the Wolf Man needed and used Freud.

The subject of visuality and psychoanalysis is beyond my scope; suffice it to say that psychoanalytic thinkers have given much attention to visual art and culture. Even so, particular imagetext forms, such as the picturebooks, do not have the centrality to psychoanalysis that fairy tales enjoy. When it comes to fairy tales, we can see Oz in Freud, but it's harder to see picturebooks "in" psychoanalysis. Even so, the picturebook is often considered a psychological form and has been linked to Freud specifically as well as to various psychological traditions. Consider, for instance, two American picturebooks published in 1963. The first, really a mock picturebook, is *A Child's Guide to Freud*, with words by Louise Armstrong and pictures by Whitney Darrow, Jr. Dedicated to "Sigmund F., A Really Mature Person," *A Child's Guide to Freud* is a send-up of Freudian ideas at their most crassly applied. The book is pitched to adults and specifically upper-middle-class New Yorkers; Armstrong was an avowed Manhattanite and Darrow a long-time *New Yorker* cartoonist and children's book illustrator. "This is Mommy," the book begins, showing a woman chasing a naughty little boy. "When she won't let you play doctor with Susie, call her OVERPROTECTIVE. This is Daddy. He sleeps in the same room as Mommy. Call this a MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP. The feelings you have about Mommy and Daddy closing their door are called OEDIPAL. This means that you want to have a

Meaningful Relationship with Mommy. If you think a lot about this, it is called a WISH. If you think about it in your sleep, it is called a DREAM. If you suck your thumb instead of thinking about it, it is called COMPENSATION.” And so on. The keywords (all in caps) derive from Freud but also from popularizations of Freud. While Freud had a lot to say about children, he didn’t write for them, so a picturebook about Freud seems laughable if not absurd.ⁱⁱ

1963 saw the publication of another American picturebook in part inspired by if not thematically preoccupied with Freud (and also staged around a naughty boy), Maurice Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are*. Immediately the book was affirmed as a psychological masterpiece in picturebook form, exploring as it does young Max’s anger and adventurous imagination within the safe space of home. Even Bettelheim, who at first pronounced it too scary for young readers, changed his mind about Sendak’s book – indeed, *Where the Wild Things Are* and the debate about its significance may have helped focus Bettelheim’s attention on fairy tale enchantments, despite his belief that “pictures divert from the learning process rather than foster it” (*Uses* 60).ⁱⁱⁱ With his characteristic mix of humor and seriousness, Sendak has long acknowledged his debts to Freud, heightened by his own analysis in the 1950s. In interviews and essays, he variously affirms and makes fun of his passion for psychoanalysis, likening his work (after Freud) to an archaeological dig. Writing about his response to Jean de Brunhoff’s Babar books in the 1950s, for instance, Sendak remarks “I was then a green recruit fresh from the analyst’s couch and woe betides any work that failed to loudly signal its Freudian allegiance. With a convert’s proverbial fervor, I rushed pell-mell into the very heart of what I considered Babar’s unresolved problem: his mother’s death, of course” (Sendak, *Caldecott & Co.*, 97). Sendak credits de Brunhoff’s son Laurent for urging him “out of my frantic Freudian ‘dig’” (98) and into more nuanced modes of understanding and artistic practice. In a 1993 interview with

Leonard S. Marcus, Sendak describes *Outside Over There* as “an excavation of my soul, the last archaeological Sendakian dig!” (176). “You could be describing an end to therapy,” says Marcus. “In a sense, yes,” replies Sendak, “a very rich sense” (176). Sendak signals his allegiance to the spirit but not necessarily the letter of psychoanalysis.

While the scenario of teaching Freud to children remains comic, the stuff of standard *New Yorker* humor, the idea that the picturebook has something to offer by way of psychological value for children – and psychological insight into childhood – is now widely embraced, usually without reference to Freud or classical psychoanalysis. Sendak’s vision is especially powerful in part because it isn’t explicitly or crassly Freudian, because it gives us a Freudian child without the more clinical or applied trappings. We know Max is a Freudian child because he is a Wild Thing and a wolf-boy, reminiscent of Mowgli and other feral boys who found their way from colonialist fantasy into the social sciences. As Rod McGillis has also noted, there are strong echoes of the Wolf Man’s case in *Where the Wild Things Are* – Max seems a pint-sized and less neurotic version of the Wolf Man, and the wild rumpus a kinder, gentler variant on the Wolf Man’s pivotal and terrifying dream of the wolves. The Wolf Man case lives on in psychoanalytic literature and various comic engagements with such, as with Sarah Boxer’s *In The Floyd Archives*. Sendak’s first solo picturebook, *Kenny’s Window* (1956), likewise alludes to the famous dream of the wolves; instead of the six or seven white wolves of the Wolf Man’s dream Sendak gives us seven seemingly absurd questions and a tree covered in white blossoms. Sendak is perhaps more openly indebted to Freud than most picturebook author-illustrators, which sets him apart, but he is also very much operating in the broader tradition of what I call picturebook psychology. In fact, Sendak may be the most representative figure of picturebook psychology, by which I mean a shared cultural understanding of the picturebook as a

psychological as well as an artistic form in tandem with various psychological uses or applications of the form. And while *Where the Wild Things Are* is a serious rather than comic text, Sendak has his own connections to the comic-highbrow culture of *The New Yorker*, having been profiled in its pages and having seen his Wild Things humorously linked with adult sexuality and its discontents.

Earlier conceptions of the picturebook as a psychological form helped make possible the career of Sendak. In his introduction to *Ways of Telling*, a book of interviews with picturebook author-illustrators, Leonard S. Marcus points out that the picturebook has been shaped by twentieth-century conceptions of psychic life, hinting that the reverse may also be true.^{iv} Barbara Bader's history of the picturebook likewise points the way, with its suggestive subtitle ("From Noah's Ark to the Beast Within") and with several chapters tracing the connections between the genre and interest in child psychology. By all indications picturebook psychology emerged more slowly and was less professionally cohesive than fairytale psychology. There were multiple influences at work, among them psychoanalysis, European child analysis and American-style child study and progressive educational theory. In the States especially, growing interest in the picturebook form dovetailed with attempts to rethink the writing and reading of children's literature in light of child psychology and progressive education. Picturebook psychology is also more diffuse because picturebooks are the result of a collaboration between author and illustrator. Sendak's reputation as a "psychological" author comes in part from the singularity and cohesiveness of his artistic practice – it's easier to see him as an authority on childhood both because he's one person and because his illustrations are so integral to the storyline.

Before the time of Sendak, Lucy Sprague Mitchell of the Bank Street School was among the earliest to imagine children's books as aids to cognitive and emotional developmental. For instance, she notes in her *Here and Now Story Book* (1921) the childhood pleasure "of enumerating objects which are grouped together in some close association, usually physical juxtaposition" (11) – hence the most successful picturebook of her Bank Street protégé Margaret Wise Brown, *Goodnight Moon* (1947), essentially a recitation of cherished objects within a child's bedroom. Mitchell ensured that Freudian theory was taught at Bank Street and was well acquainted with various traditions of child study and child analysis. Mitchell, like Brown after her, wrote but did not illustrate her books. In any case, her protégés, especially Brown, were curious about sexuality, dreams, and creativity, and used the picturebook form to explore such. Children, Mitchell also asserts, are interested in questions of "Use," she remarks, citing on this issue an early book on child psychology: "Does [the child] not think of the world largely in terms of active functioning? Has not the typical question of this age become 'What's it for'? Even his early definitions are in terms of use, which has a strong motor implication. 'A table is to eat off of'; 'a spoon is to eat in'; 'a river means where you get drinks out of water, and catch fish, and throw stones.'" (Waddle: *Introduction to Child Psychology*, p. 170)" (*Here and Now*, 19). "Use" with a strong motor implication is the organizing conceit of another important picturebook, Ruth Krauss's *A Hole is to Dig: A First Book of First Definitions* (1952), illustrated by Sendak. "Mashed potatoes are to give everybody enough," the book begins; "A face is so you can make faces. A face is something to have on the front of your head" (n.p.).

Another reason for the link between picturebooks and psychology was the proliferating literature on the drawings of children and/or child art, a literature spanning psychology, philosophy, semiotics, art history, and educational theory.^v The link between childhood and

drawing goes back at least to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and was a central aspect of the educational theory of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. Children's drawings became a centerpiece of what's now called developmental psychology through the work of many intellectuals but especially Herman T. Lukens, Georges Luquet, Georges Rouma, and Jean Piaget. The influential child analyst Melanie Klein also paid great attention to the visual imaginations and productions of children, especially to drawings produced during play therapy. This focus on the drawings of childhood likely helped legitimate drawing for children. While the study of drawing is no longer so central to child psychology, pictures of children drawing have become a staple in picturebooks.^{vi} Joan Menefee has identified over seventy-five such picturebooks, beginning with Du Bose Heyward's *The Country Bunny and the Little Gold Shoes* (1939). Author-illustrator Crockett Johnson's *Harold and the Purple Crayon* (1955) is perhaps the most famous, but another from the same period is *A Very Special House* (1953) written by Krauss (Johnson's wife) and illustrated by Sendak. In both texts, a child draws his world into existence.^{vii}

Menefee distinguishes between books that use the child drawing motif as decoration or authentication of the picturebook form, and books that “ask the reader how children achieve agency or control over their environment, what their imaginations consist of, and how they develop” (1). The incorporation of the artistic child within the picturebook points to the confluence of artistic practice, child psychology, and picturebook production, and serves multiple functions, among them: 1. to underscore the author's own (presumably creative) childhood and thus the larger trajectory of an artistic life; 2. to authenticate the psychological wisdom of the book and the accuracy of its take on childhood; 3. to encourage children to explore and indulge in creative activities; and 4. to encourage parents to watch, monitor, decipher, and enjoy the creative activities of childhood.

Thanks to these influences, and growing faith in the power of fantasy and imaginative storytelling, the association of the picturebook with various kinds of psychological experience as well as psychological work was well established by mid-century. In a 1954 letter to picturebook author-illustrator Ruth Krauss (Sendak's friend and collaborator), Harper children's book editor Ursula Nordstrom relays this comment from one of the company's vice presidents: "All the psychiatrists will be out of business by the time the children who now read her books are grown up. This last one [*A Very Special House*] surely takes care of many repressions" (qutd. in Marcus, *Dear Genius*, 69). Playfully but also in earnest, Nordstrom herself championed the children's book against "messy adult maladjustments," as she puts it in another 1954 letter concerning Krauss (qutd. in Marcus, *Dear Genius*, 73).

The picturebook has variously and often simultaneously been imagined as a practical tool for "here and now" psychosocial development (as for Mitchell), as a form of dreamwork (as for Brown and later Sendak), and as social prophylactic and/or an aid to therapy. There are of course important distinctions to be made within what I'm calling picturebook psychology. The most obvious trend is toward psychological instrumentalization. Any number of classic and contemporary picturebooks seem preoccupied with psychological utility and/or position themselves as aids to emotional learning. Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* (1964) has long been interpreted as being about the mother-child relationship and in particular the selflessness of mothers, with critics differing on the slant of the message. Tomie DePaola's *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs* (1973) and John Burningham's *Granpa* (1984), among many other texts, were written to help young children cope with death. Often the titles of picturebooks make obvious their focus, as with Aliko's *Feelings* (1986), Mercer Mayer's *There's a Nightmare in My Closet* (1968) and *There's Something in My Attic* (1988), and of course the popular Berenstain Bears

books, such as *The Berenstain Bears in the Dark* (1982), *The Berenstain Bears Visit the Dentist* (1981), *The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Junk Food* (1985), and so forth. And if parents are unsure which picturebooks to use with their children, they can turn to child psychologist Jacqueline Golding's *Healing Stories: Picturebooks for the Big and Small Changes in a Child's Life* (2006), an annotated guide to some 500 picturebooks addressing such problems as sibling rivalry, moving, bullying, death, and war and violence. There are dozens of articles in professional psychology and psychiatry journals dealing with the therapeutic value of children's books, films, comic strips, and toys; Golding merges this professional literature with that provided by librarians. With or without the likes of Golding, parents turn to picturebooks for help with their children, tacitly acknowledging the author-illustrator as a partner in child-rearing.

Works of art, Freud theorized, do not work unless their core fantasies are disguised; art too explicitly self-conscious about its motives is no longer art, the theory runs. Sendak is interesting in this regard, as is William Steig, author and illustrator of many beloved picturebooks and passionate advocate of the theories of renegade psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich. Although Steig makes very clear his devotion to Reich, and although we can see influences of Reich's theories of "armoring" and "orgone energy" in his books, Steig's work seems sophisticated rather than propagandistic. Sendak and Steig do not belong to the "applied" school of picturebook psychology. We might argue that Steig was already a picturebook psychologist of a sort before he started making picturebooks; he spent decades as a *New Yorker* cartoonist and one of his signature themes was the adult diminishment of children, brilliantly skewered in *The Agony and the Kindergarten* (1951). There are other accomplished picturebook authors and/or illustrators who don't belong to the "applied" or therapeutic tradition but who are less self-conscious about the psychological dimensions of their work. For some, the picturebook seems a form of self-

therapy. A particularly interesting example is the “lonely doll” picturebook series of model and photographer Dare Wright, which work through Wright’s odd childhood.

Furthermore, at least in the case of more notable practitioners, the picturebook author-illustrator functions something like an expert on childhood, his or her knowledge intuitive, personal and creative rather than clinical or accredited. That expertise depends on both familiarity with psychoanalytic or psychological discourse and with a creative and ostensibly healthy distance from it. Brown and Krauss put to inventive and artistic rather than didactic use the educational and psychological theories of their day; so too did Sendak and Steig. Sendak may be especially representative of this expertise dimension of picturebook psychology – his career has helped make possible not just the applied tradition but also a more artistic kind of picturebook engagement with psychological issues. There are likely connections between the psychological faith in play (for example, in Winnicott, and the contemporary theorist-writer Adam Phillips) and postmodern picturebook author-illustrators who thematize play as well as play around with the conventions of the genre.

Picturebook psychology thrives in the fuzzy middle space between art and discourses of the psyche, a curious amalgam of deliberate application and unconscious desire, personal idiom and collective sensibility. It has helped create and sustain psychological culture as much as the other way around. Rather than claim that certain picturebooks are classic because of their enduring psychological value, we must explore the history of that expectation, investigate how, when, and why we began to expect psychological dividends from the picturebook (and its creators).

So, to summarize: Freud used the fairy tale, but the fairytale also used Freud, becoming an integral mode of psychoanalytic and pop-psychoanalytic discourse. Picturebook psychology, on the other hand, got a nudge from Freud but emerged as a discourse post-Freud, and as such

reflects the rich and diffused traditions of lay analysis and applied psychology. Picturebooks are not as central as fairy tales to the psychoanalytic enterprise. The production of picturebooks, however, sometimes amounts to a form of authorial and psychological expertise on childhood, as especially with Sendak.

In the time I have left, a few words about another genre, so-called “golden age” fantasy. Many Anglo-American children’s classics published from around 1865 to around 1920, most of them fantasies, have been linked both to fairy tales and to psychoanalysis, even as they have found endless revision and adaptation in mass literary and visual culture. These books make up the canon of children’s literature for many people. As they became more ensconced as classics, they became part of the psychoanalytic-literary apparatus, like fairy tales before them. Or rather, their status as classics was ensured from the start by their absorption into psychological as well as mass visual culture. Down the rabbit hole and over the rainbow.

There are of course psychoanalytic readings of the books and their authors. But the characters and themes and settings of golden-age texts have found their way into popular as well as serious psychoanalysis, with various tonalities. Elsewhere I’ve suggested resemblances between Kipling’s *The Jungle Books* (which Freud admired) and variants of the psychoanalytic feral tale, such as the Wolf Man case. Psychoanalytic readings of the *Alice* books date at least to 1933, but Carroll has also inspired critical theorists as well as imaginative writers. Lacan, who disapproved of child analysis, mentions Alice and Humpty Dumpty; Lacan also comments on the prevalence of talking wolf stories. *Peter Pan* was contemporaneous with Freud, and in Barrie’s masterpiece we see the themes that preoccupied Freud – the difficulty of memory, the persistence of childhood, the problem of sexuality, the unreliability of language, even the topography of the unconscious. Nonetheless, the character of Peter has been used to indict

American and/or male immaturity, as in Dwight MacDonald's "A Theory of Mass Culture," in which MacDonald laments the infantilization of adults and remarks that "Peter Pan might be a better symbol of America than Uncle Sam" (66). Psychologist Dan Kiley returns this idea to a pop-therapeutic register in his book *The Peter Pan Syndrome* (1983), followed by his *The Wendy Dilemma*. These and other appropriations tend to ignore the complexities of their source material. American popular filmic adaptations of golden age texts, especially of *Peter Pan*, downplay their complexities in favor of simplistic "adventure" and/or inner-child recovery stories. American graphic novels and video games, by contrast, play up the more adult content and contexts of the golden age books – for example, American McGee's *Alice*, Alan Moore and Melinda Gebbie's graphic novel *Lost Girls*.

Since I'm in Winnipeg, consider the last lines of A. A. Milne's *The House of Pooh Corner*: "So they went off together. But wherever they go, and whatever happens to them on the way, in that enchanted place on the top of the Forest, a little Bear will always be playing" (180). No wonder D. W. Winnicott identifies Pooh as the exemplary plaything and transitional object in his groundbreaking text *Playing and Reality*. In an essay about critical theory, play, and "children's researches," Michael Payne compares scenes of child sexual curiosity in Freud's *The Sexual Theories of Children* (1908) with Chapter VII of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, in which Pooh and Piglet puzzle over the arrival of Kanga and Baby Roo.^{viii} Also citing *Alice* and *Peter Pan*, Payne finds in both Freud and in classic children's literature a double consciousness in which the adult coexists with the child and listens for the child's innocence – this, he says, is "theory." Frederick Crews, in contrast, uses Pooh to lampoon the absurdities or excesses of literary criticism.

It's no coincidence that Jacqueline Rose turns to Peter Pan as well as to Freud in making her case against the idea of children's literature. Rose holds that children's fiction is a ruse of sorts,

one that “hangs on . . . the impossible relation between adult and child” and is best described as “something of a soliciting, a chase, or even a seduction.”^{ix} We have been reading the wrong Freud to children, she declares, meaning that we have preferred ego and developmental psychology to psychoanalysis proper, which resists the idea of developmental progress. By denying the complexities of psyche and language alike, and by fantasizing that childhood is easily retrieved, we have invented children’s literature against as much as out of complex works such as *Peter Pan*. Rose uses Barrie to make her case for Freud, implying that *Peter Pan* is the closest thing we have to good psychoanalysis in the domain of children’s literature. Rose capitalizes upon and extends the use-value of Peter Pan for critical theory in the wake of psychoanalysis – and anticipates queer theory in the process. In declaring the traditional understanding of children’s literature “impossible,” Rose shows the way to a different understanding of children’s literature, one in which difficult language, psychoanalysis, and theory take their rightful place. Alice and Peter Pan have in fact become poster children for critical theory and especially queer theory of late. Consider the cover illustration of the recent Minnesota UP anthology *Curiouser: On the Queer Lives of Children*, which features our dreamchild Alice sporting butterfly wings and a spiky snail tail.

The *Wizard of Oz*, which Baum presents as a “modernized fairy tale” has likewise been drawn into the orbit of psychoanalysis and queer theory precisely because it shares their concerns – among them the agency of children, the nature of fantasy, and the workings of sexuality and gender. Oz has inspired not a few souls searching for alternatives to the normative story of childhood and children’s literature. Outsider artist Henry Darger was apparently preoccupied with Oz and in particular its transgendered children – Darger’s phallic little girls were inspired in part by Tip/Osma as well as powerful girl characters such as Dorothy and General Jinjur. Noting

that Baum's chief readers are girls and adult men, Beverly Lyon Clark underscores the odd gender politics of both Baum's novels and the resulting fandom. The 1939 MGM film, of course, kept *The Wizard of Oz* alive, its thematics of home and away broadly seductive but particularly so to the queer and the diasporic imaginations (mention Rushdie). Like other aspects of the MGM vehicle, the dream motif was actually introduced earlier, in a 1925 film featuring Larry Semon, and there linked specifically with the telling of stories to a young girl. Early cinema was preoccupied with dreams and delusions as well as with child subjects. Film theorist Christian Metz theorizes that film puts viewers in a state of regressive (if not infantile) suggestibility, and that's perhaps true, but film's links with psychoanalysis and childhood are also historical or contextual.

While efforts have been made to claim Oz as a therapeutic fable – one of which by Baum's great-granddaughter, a Jungian sandplay therapist – Oz more easily lends itself to ironic or playful sorts of spin. Given its association with gay culture, and its adult novelizations such as *Was* and *Wicked*, it's perhaps only a matter of time before queer theory colonizes Oz. Jerry Aline Flieger points the way in her spirited essay, "Up the Ante, Oedipus! Deleuze in Oz," a defense of Freud and Oedipus against the "anti-Oedipus" critique of Deleuze. Flieger doesn't so much interpret the story of Oz as retell it, claim it for her own purposes, replacing the Tin Man with the desiring machine/cyborg "Kettlepus" and casting Deleuze (after Freud) as the Wizard of Theory. "Indeed," she writes, "Deleuze's rainbow is both smooth and striated, and it may lead only to a leaky cauldron filled with fool's gold . . . Like Oedipus, we have gone to the ends of the earth, but we have never left home" (113).

This, I promise, is my last paragraph. This paper and the larger project from which it derives argues for a new approach to the subject of children's literature and psychoanalysis.

While the category “children’s literature” isn’t taken for granted, the real push is toward a different understanding of psychoanalysis. It’s obvious that much of the “psychoanalytic” engagement with fairy tales, picturebooks, and classic fantasies is really the stuff of popular and material culture. Some might not see such deviation from the classic aims and forms of psychoanalysis as anything but popularization (worse still) Americanization. I agree, however, with one of the leading scholars of psychoanalysis, John Forrester, who argues that psychoanalysis is best understood not as science or religion but as popular culture. As I’ve tried to show today, children’s literature is not merely a testing ground for psychoanalytic theory but rather a vital and intriguing part of the popular culture of psychoanalysis. Thank you.

ⁱ In the second of two provocative chapters on the Little Hans case of 1909, Peter L. Rudnytsky offers a reading complementary to that of Winters, proposing that Freud invokes the Greek figure of Oedipus as part of a disavowal of his own Jewishness and the Jewishness of psychoanalytic culture

ⁱⁱ There are other instances of children’s literature being positioned against or alongside psychoanalysis to comic effect. Coincidentally enough, one of the more famous was also published in 1963, Frederick Crews’ *The Pooh Perplex*, a satire of literary criticism including psychoanalytic approaches. In this case, Crews uses a classic children’s fantasy to underscore the excesses and absurdities of interpretive discourse. Whereas Armstrong and Darrow

appropriate the picturebook form to comic adult ends, Crews uses *Pooh* to expose the dangers of overreading or misreading – perhaps

just of reading.

ⁱⁱⁱ As it happens, many early picturebooks were illustrated fairytales, as we can see in the case of the Wolf Man as discussed in this chapter.

^{iv} “The pathfinding discoveries of twentieth-century psychology,” writes Marcus, “which made apparent the developmental value of books for even the youngest children, inform their craft” (*Ways of Telling* 4). In an interview with David Serlin and Brian Selznick, Marcus remarks more directly that “it was during the 1960s and 1970s that psychology for the first time became a popular course of study at the undergraduate level . . . It was against this background that the insights and psychology and psychoanalysis began to find their way into children’s books” (p?).

^v This literature is extensive, but for some useful overviews, see Howard Gardener, *Artful Scribbles*; Jacqueline Goodnow, *Children Drawing*; Thomas and Silk, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Children’s Drawings*, and especially the superb annotated chronology on children’s art by Joel Fineberg (with Olga Ivashkevich and Mysoon Rizk), in Fineberg’s edited volume *When We Were Young*. On children’s graphic work (including excellent discussions of drawing and its analysis), see also Claire Golomb’s *Child Art in Context* and *The Child’s Creation of a Pictorial World*. On Piaget and drawing specifically, see Morss 132-40.

^{vi} By the 1970s, notes Goodnow, the study of drawing was rarely mentioned in standard textbooks on child psychology, although interest picked up again a decade or so later (see 155).

^{vii} Creative play, of course, has become a dominant motif and even mode of picturebooks in the contemporary moment, with postmodern author-illustrators like Chris Van Allsburg and Jon Ciesczka having great fun with the conceit of the imagination run amok.

^{viii} Michael Payne, "What Difference Has Theory Made? From Freud to Adam Phillips,"
College Literature 32, no. 2 (2005): 1-15.

^{ix} Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan, or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*
(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 1-2.