

Psychology and Fairy Tales

Outline

- How to read a fairy tale
- Three views on psychology and fairy tales
 - Sigmund Freud
 - Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*
 - Carl Jung
 - Marie-Louise von Franz
 - “Self Theory”
 - Sheldon Cashdan
- Introduction to Freud

How to Read a Fairy Tale

- Don't read just for plot
- Visualize
 - Imagine reading to a child (or having someone read to you when you were a child)
- Read a tale the way you would look at a painting
- Look for familiar or fixed epithets and expressions
- Look for one-dimensionality, depthlessness, and abstract style

Psychology and Fairy Tales

- Psychoanalysis
 - Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)
 - Bruno Bettelheim
 - Carl Jung (1875–1961)
 - Marie-Louise von Franz
- “Self Theory”
 - Sheldon Cashdan (b. 1935)

The Freudian Personality

- Id
- Superego
- Ego

Freudian Terms and Principles

- Pleasure principle
- Reality principle
- Separation anxiety
- Projection
- Displacement
- Oedipal conflict

Freudian Stages of Development

| Stage | Age | Features |
|---------|------------|--|
| Oral | 0 to 1-1/2 | Nursing |
| Anal | 1-1/2 to 3 | Expulsion/Retention |
| Phallic | 3 to 5 | Unconscious sexual desire Oedipal stage |
| Latency | 6 to 12 | Dormant libido |
| Genital | Puberty | Libido, libido, libido! |

Carl Jung

- Psyche
 - Conscious
 - Unconscious
- Archetype
- Anima/animus
- Shadow

Self Theory

- Sheldon Cashdan, "The Witch Must Die"
- Selected anxieties
 - Gluttony ("Hansel and Gretel")
 - Vanity ("Snow White")
 - Envy ("Cinderella")
- Fairy tale as psychodrama
- Why the witch must die

Bruno Bettelheim



Bruno Bettelheim

- 1903 born in Vienna
- 1938 Dachau, Buchenwald
- 1939 Chicago
- 1943 "Individual and Mass Behaviour in Extreme Situations"
- 1944 University of Chicago, Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School
- 1976 *The Uses of Enchantment*
- 1990 suicide

Bruno Bettelheim (Biographies)

- Nina Sutton. *Bettelheim, a Life and a Legacy*. Tr. from the French by David Sharp, in collaboration with the author. New York: Basic Books. 1996.
- Richard Pollak. *The Creation of Dr. B: A Biography of Bruno Bettelheim*. New York: Simon and Schuster. 1996.

Features of Child's Psychology

- Belief in animism
- No understanding of death
 - Separation anxiety; mortal anxiety
- Inability to grasp abstract concepts
- Personalized understanding
- Need for magic
- Vicarious satisfaction
- Children understand in tales what they are ready and able to understand

Fairy Tales and Children

- Why is there evil in fairy tales? Why are they sometimes scary? Even gory?
- Why are fairy tale characters (unlike real people) usually all good or all bad?
- How do fairy tales encourage children to be good?
- How do fairy tales differ from myths?
