

Kenneth Kidd
LIT 6856; W E1-3
Spring 2002

392-6650, ext. 302
kkidd@english.ufl.edu
Office Hours: T 6 & 8; R 6
and by appointment

Psychoanalysis and Children's Culture

Required Texts

Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*
Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*
Sigmund Freud, *Three Case Histories*
Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*
Melanie Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation*
Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*
Stephen Mitchell and Margaret J. Black, *Freud and Beyond*
D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*

and a coursepacket from Xerographic (927 NW 13th Street)

Recommended Texts:

Richard Appignanesi and Oscar Zarate, *Freud for Beginners*
Darian Leader and Judy Groves, *Introducing Lacan*

Both psychoanalysis and children's culture are preoccupied with origins, growth and development, family dynamics, language acquisition, socialization/acculturation, mortality, and other dimensions of the human experience. Here's Freud writing in 1925, on the centrality of children to psychoanalysis: "Children have become the main subject of psycho-analytic research and have thus replaced in importance the neurotics on which its studies began" (introduction to Aichhorn's *Wayward Youth*). Even in his famous case histories – Dora, The Rat Man, the Wolf Man – Freud concentrates on the residual child who makes life difficult for the struggling adult. Subsequent analysts and theorists have taken Freud's focus on childhood in different directions. Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, Margaret Mahler and other analysts (usually women) developed "child analysis" as a therapeutic discipline in its own right. Ego psychology and humanist psychology in particular have been concerned with childhood. Folklorists were the earliest humanities scholars to develop psychoanalytic interpretations of children's (or "childish") texts, even if Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment* is now the most famous. Post-Lacanian and feminist revisions of psychoanalysis have produced some exciting readings. In children's literature studies, Jacqueline Rose's *The Case of Peter Pan* has been particularly influential. Rose declares that children's literature is an impossible fiction; at issue in narrative "for" children is not "what the child wants, but ... what the adult desires –

desires in the very act of construing the child as the object of its speech” (2). Children’s media has also been treated psychoanalytically -- Jason Isaac Mauro even argues that the Splash Mountain ride at Disney’s Magic Kingdom theme park provides a controlled experience of death anxiety. Who knew?

This course will profile the psychoanalytic literature on childhood and children’s culture from the early years of the discipline to the present moment. First, we’ll review the history and reception of psychoanalysis and read the work of several major theorists. Then we’ll turn our attention to folklore, children’s narrative, and assorted texts of popular culture. Too often psychoanalytic readings of texts are one-way, and while we’ll attempt some applied psychoanalysis, we’ll also use narrative to interrogate psychoanalytic theory, method, and protocol -- esp. since folklore and popular literature helped make psychoanalysis possible in the first place. At issue is what I call, after Michele LeDoeuff’s study of philosophy, the “psychoanalytic imaginary” -- that is, the theoretical and imaginative repertoire of psychoanalysis, from stated principles to implicit paradigms to particular tropes, images, and rhetorical strategies. We’ll conclude the course with Butler’s *The Psychic Life of Power*, an attempt to rethink psychoanalysis in light of theories of subjection within the Western philosophical tradition. Throughout the course, we’ll be more concerned with the discursive and explanatory power of psychoanalysis than its “truth” per se. As it happens, the “truth” of psychoanalysis has been at issue from the start, as has what Jacques Derrida calls “resistances of psychoanalysis” -- resistance(s) to (psycho)analysis from within and without.

The reading is often tedious/difficult. I don’t expect you to understand all material immediately -- in fact, I’d be a little alarmed if anyone does -- but I do expect you to do all the assigned reading on time. The psychoanalytic literature is vast and varied; take the time to survey it beyond our immediate interests. In addition to the many books available, check out the following journals: *American Imago* (edited by Peter Rudnytsky of our Department), *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, and *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* (formerly under the direction of Anna Freud herself).

Assignments. You will write two short papers to be distributed to all class members, as well as a final seminar paper (one copy is fine). Regular attendance and participation are required and appreciated.

Essay 1. Theorist/clinician profile. Profile any psychoanalytic theorist/clinician past or present, excepting the Freuds, Klein, Lacan, Bettelheim and Winnicott. Provide a brief overview of that individual’s personal and professional background, training, theoretical beliefs and innovations, major writings -- whatever seems most useful and appropriate. Explain that individual’s contributions or relevance to the psychoanalytic understanding of childhood and (where possible) to psychoanalytic perspectives on children’s culture. With respect to the latter, speculation is fine. I’d like everyone to work on a different individual. Let me know what issues most interest you and I can help you choose a subject. 5-8 d-s pp. Make copies for everyone and bring them to class on the due date.

Possible candidates (others are fine; just check with me): Alfred Adler, August Aichhorn, Jessica Benjamin, John Bowlby, Norman Brown, Nancy Chodorow, Alan Dundes, Erik Erikson, W. R. D. Fairbairn, Sándor Ferenczi, Carol Gilligan, Karen

Horney, Luce Irigaray, Ernest Jones, C. C. Jung, Heinz Kohut, Julie Kristeva, Jean Laplanche, Rosine Lefort, Hans Loewald, Margaret Mahler, Alice Miller, Adam Phillips, Jean Piaget, Otto Rank, Jacqueline Rose, Kaja Silverman, Harry Stack Sullivan, Klaus Theweleit, Slavoj Zizek.

Essay 2. Applied psychoanalysis. Draw from the psychoanalytic theories/ideas of any single theorist/clinician to examine a children's text of your choice (folkloric, literary, pop cultural). You may use the same subject of your first essay or develop a different interest. If you prefer, you may address a genre rather than a particular text -- e.g. nonsense verse, or historical fiction, or the adolescent novel. You may also write about our default literary texts: Beverly Cleary's *Dear Mr. Henshaw* or Louis Sachar's *Holes*. If you like, write about a film or cultural text, such as a theme-park ride, playscape, or popular eatery. Be as faithful as you can to your psychoanalytic subject, but have fun with this one, too. 5-8 d-s pp. Make and bring copies on the due date.

Seminar Paper. Develop a more sustained treatment of any course-related topic. I do expect some treatment of both psychoanalysis and children's culture, preferably in relation to one another, but the details are negotiable. The paper may develop from the short paper(s) but only if that's advantageous to you. Any approach is fine, provided that the essay is well developed, thorough, and sufficiently researched. Let me know if you'd like some help. 20-25 d-s pp. Due 4/29.

Reading Schedule

January

- 9 *Are You Considering Psychoanalysis?* Introduction(s).
- 16 *The Impossible Profession*. Steedman; Eagleton; Winters, Cushman, Hale.
- 23 Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (all selections); Mitchell & Black, Ch. 1.
- 30 Sigmund Freud, *Three Case Histories* ("Rat Man" and "Wolf Man").

February

- 6 Anna Freud, *The Psycho-analytical Treatment of Children* (all selections); Mitchell & Black, Ch. 2.
- 13 *What's Love Got to Do with It?* Melanie Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation* (selections TBA); Mitchell & Black, Ch. 4.
- 20 D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (all selections); Mitchell & Black, Ch. 5.
Essay 1 due.
- 27 Jacques Lacan, *Écrits* (Chs. 1-5 especially; all selections if possible); Barzilai; Mitchell & Black, Ch. 7.

March

- 6 *Spring Break.*
 13 *The Child between PSA and Literature.* Blum (all selections); Rose.
 20 *PSA and/as Fairy Tale.* Dundes; Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment.*
 27 continued. Analysis of fairy-tale films.

April

- 3 *Applied PSA.* Lucy Rollin, all selections; Coats. **Essay 2 due.**
 10 continued. Williams; Phillips; everyone's "applied" essays. In-class analysis of children's texts. *Dear Mr. Henshaw?* In-class analysis.
 17 Mauro. *Holes?* Even more in-class analysis.
 24 *Subject to Change?* Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* (Introduction, Chs. 3 & 5 especially; all selections if possible).

Seminar Paper due Monday, 4/29.