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THE PURPOSES OF ENCHANTMENT:
An Adlerian Approach to Fairy Tales

by

Donald Robert Officer

A thesis submitted to
the faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts.
Department of English

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

December 15, 1988

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THE PURPOSES OF ENCHANTMENT:

An Adlerian Approach to Fairy Tales

submitted by Donald Robert Officer, B.A.

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts.

Thesis Supervisor

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of several familiar fairy tales interpreted from the standpoint of Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology. The dissertation argues that although Freud's depth psychology has been extensively applied to interpret children's literature in general and fairy tales in particular, a valuable range of critical insight is lost to the scholarly reader if the perspective of Individual Psychology is excluded. The text presents and exemplifies clarifying principles to compare and contrast Psychoanalysis and Individual Psychology as applied to the literature of fairy tales. Bruno Bettelheim's The Uses of Enchantment is the main source of psychoanalytic interpretation and it is Bettelheim's Freudian readings of "Hansel and Gretel", "Beauty and the Beast", "The Three Little Pigs", "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs", "Goldilocks and the Three Bears", "Little Red Riding Hood", "The Goose Girl", "Cinderella", "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "The Sleeping Beauty" which are contrasted with Adlerian readings of the same tales.

In Chapter 1, Bettelheim's claim that traditional fairy tales are both satisfying and appropriate for the listening or reading of children is considered. The rationale for a theoretical introduction to Freud's approach to literature and a comparison with Adler's ideas is reviewed in broad aesthetic terms. Brief reference is made to Jungian analysis of fairy tales and the advantages of a pluralist understanding which comprehends distinctive depth psychologies. Chapter 2 presents the psychoanalytic conception of the association of dreams, fantasy, wish fulfillment and consolation within the

framework of the unconscious. Freud's ideas about instincts or drives and the psychosexual phases of development are examined globally and for their specific implications for the interpretation of fairy tales. Chapter 3 presents the premises of Individual Psychology and extrapolates these to the child's personality and fairy tales. The importance of Adler's "subjective" orientation and its implications for critical priorities are discussed. The elucidation of personal goals as a focus for an Adlerian aesthetics is explained. The chapter concludes with a consideration of Jungian aesthetics and ways in which concepts such as the archetype can coexist effectively within the Adlerian framework. Chapter 4 provides an extensive comparative review of the selected tales listed above, juxtaposing readings which reflect Adler's and Freud's viewpoints. The critical advantages of the educational model of Adler's therapy over Freud's medical model are considered as applied to children's literature. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis with a summary of the argument and suggestions for further research. The case for a pluralist reading is restated in light of the supporting evidence presented. The literary potential of Individual Psychology's unrealized significance is considered. Some implications for parents and pedagogy are elucidated.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION:

SOME REASONS FOR AN ADLERIAN CRITICISM OF THE FAIRY TALE

Bruno Bettelheim published The Uses of Enchantment in 1975. In this work he argued strongly for the retention of fairy tales as an important source of enrichment in the child's life. His experiences with both normal and abnormal children persuaded him that a common need persists for a literature which encourages a child's quest for meaning and attracts children of widely varying ages and levels of intelligence.¹

Bettelheim claims that folk fairy tales are more satisfying and are consequently more important to young readers and listeners than other forms of children's literature. He dismisses the suggestion that fairy tales are irrelevant to modern situations by comparing much of modern children's literature with its strong emphasis on contemporary reality with the rich imagery of traditional tales. In commenting on fairy tales in several contexts, Alfred Adler notes they reflect some negative tendencies as well as exhibiting a positive impact. His view of fairy tales took into account the brutal side of many popular tales without trying to suggest it is entirely masked by fantasy. He saw the violence and cruelty of fairy tales as a socially condoned outlet for aggression.² He noted for instance how the youngest child, although lionized in folk tales of every culture, is frequently babied and spoiled becoming a

¹ Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (New York: Vintage Books, 1977) 3-11.

² Heinz & Rowena Ansbacher, eds. The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler (New York: Basic Books, 1956) 36.

major source of societal problems.³ Yet Adler, who held all the arts and notably literature in the highest esteem, singled out fairy tales in particular for high praise:

Some day soon it will be realized that the artist is the leader of mankind on the path to the absolute truth. Among poetic works of art which have led me to the insights of Individual Psychology the following stand out as pinnacles: fairy tales, the Bible, Shakespeare and Goethe. ⁴

Although the endurance of fairy tales among children is evidence of popularity, it is not the purpose of this thesis to present scientific proof of the child's favorable response to this traditional material nor to argue the superiority of fairy tales over other forms of literature. This thesis attempts to elucidate the psychoanalytic approach to the fairy tale first by reviewing relevant aspects of Sigmund Freud's work, then by examining Bettelheim's contention concerning the value of fairy tales for children from a psychoanalytic point of view. This review of both Freud and Bettelheim lays the groundwork for a general comparison with Alfred Adler's personality theory which he called Individual Psychology. Adler's Individual Psychology is outlined in broad terms, as it differs from Psychoanalysis and particularly as it may be applied to the interpretation of fairy tales.

At the beginning of the fourth chapter, the outline of an approach to the fairy tale consistent with Individual Psychology is sketched. Several familiar fairy tales are reviewed to demonstrate how Bettelheim reflects Freud's position. This thesis then moves to its principal purpose, which is the development of an Adlerian interpretation of the fairy tale through a series of representative examples. These selected fairy tales are further examined,

³ Ansbacher 380.

⁴ Ansbacher 329.

drawing upon Adler's theory and principles. Adler's educational model of therapeutic goals outlined at the start of Chapter 4 is used to demonstrate how all the goals of client reeducation are illustrated throughout each selected tale. This thesis suggests the formulation of an Adlerian aesthetics as differentiated from both a Freudian and a Jungian base. The reader will be asked to consider the possible reappraisal of many literary works and of the approach to literature itself which an Adlerian perspective invites. A summary of what has been argued and some interesting prospects for a wider application of Individual Psychology in criticism conclude the dissertation.

Adler like Freud was interested in motivation. However Freud and Adler differed strongly in theory and practice. The Adlerian view of man is of a being striving consciously towards goals within a phenomenal field. This view contrasts with Freud's less optimistic picture of an unwitting, virtually enslaved creature labouring like a psychic engine driven by unconscious instincts. As a consequence of this fundamental distinction in viewpoint, Adlerians regard psychotherapy more as a cooperative educational enterprise than as a medical treatment based upon a pathological diagnosis. Adler's man is powerfully motivated by the need to associate with his fellows. Individual Psychology postulates that success or failure in life's tasks can be predicted according to the level of social interest the individual displays. Given the social emphases of the Adlerian approach, at first glance it may seem surprising that to date, Individual Psychology has not sought to enter or influence the discipline of literary criticism.

Adler's own writing furnishes few direct examples of any substantial literary criticism. Perhaps the explanation for this lack of critical development lies with the founders of Individual Psychology who considered themselves more clinicians than theorists, eschewing the involved

nomenclature of the Freudians. Adler did not want to see his idea of Individual Psychology altered indiscriminately, nor did he welcome its identification with specific religious and political doctrines. In particular, he doubted the competence of psychologists who transplanted themselves without special training to other spheres. For another, he believed it necessary to avoid the controversies of those areas which might obscure the goals of Individual Psychology. Most important, Adler always took the part of the individual; he was committed to assist the person regardless of affiliation.

Practically and theoretically Adler and the other early individual psychologists expressed reasonable concerns which would explain the retardation in development of an Adlerian reading of literary works. Their first concern had to be the consolidation of the basic framework for therapeutic purposes. The reductionist climate of the early twentieth century concentrated their energies on the defence of the integrity of the person. Adler wanted to impress upon his adherents and critics that Individual Psychology did not regard the arts as the compensatory by-products of neurosis. Psychoanalysis unfortunately has become associated with this idea which tends to trivialize all creativity.

At times when the Adlerians drew examples from history or the arts, commentators likewise distorted the public perception through improper emphasis. For example, Adler has noted that Beethoven's hearing was impaired. Demosthenes the orator had a speech impediment and Homer was reputed to be blind. He offered these observations to support his hypothesis of compensation for organ inferiority. To this day, many have taken Adler's views to imply that works of genius are no more than perverse attempts to overcome or deny manifest inferiority. Such a narrow interpretation not only distorts Adler's theory but also denigrates the motives of many

outstanding individuals and the achievements of our civilization. More importantly, such an interpretation also overlooks the role of social interest. This concept of Adler's is at least as important to his theories as the ideas of perceived inferiority and of the unity of purpose in all the individual's actions. Social interest is the English translation of a more encompassing German word Adler used to describe both the capacity to cooperate with others for the common good and the awareness of the universal interrelatedness of all human beings.⁵ Those who develop social interest overcome the drive for superiority and absorption with self-interest. Persons low in social interest become easily discouraged and may withdraw or engage in useless, criminal or dangerous activities as a compensation for their overwhelming sense of inadequacy.

Psychoanalysis has also suffered from oversimplification. In writing Civilization and its Discontents, Freud attempted a critique of the inhibitory and repressive techniques of our society.⁶ Some readers interpret this work as a disdainful account of the historical progression of culture.⁷ It is more likely they are simply reading Freud's detachment and characteristic pessimism as cynicism. Bettelheim attributes this bias in part to the contemporary prevalence of narcissism.⁸ Freud pursued a scholarly interest in anthropology parallel to his clinical concerns all his life. For the most part,

⁵ Don C. Dinkmeyer, W. L. Pew, and Don C. Dinkmeyer, Jr., Adlerian Counseling and Psychotherapy

⁶ Sigmund Freud, Civilization and its Discontents (London: Hogarth Press, 1963) 45 - 53.

⁷ Ernest Jones, The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud (New York: Basic Books, 1961) 477-479.

⁸ Bruno Bettelheim, Freud and Man's Soul, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982) 101-103.

he chose not to write from this perspective. But when he did, he invited problems in interpretation. In venturing into other fields less frequently, perhaps Adler showed judicious caution.

This thesis contends, however, that Adler's humanism as expressed through Individual Psychology lends itself particularly well to the articulation of a compelling and consistent literary analysis. Furthermore, because of its concerns with the growth of personality in the child, Adler's approach could prove especially fruitful ground for an exploration of the role fairy tales play in the child's personal development. As in Bettelheim's book, the child is the emphasis of this work as children or very young adults are so frequently the heroes and heroines of the tales examined.

Why use an Adlerian approach to the fairy tale when Adlerians have not frequently ventured into criticism and there is no prospect of verifying these speculations by objective test? I believe the answer can be inferred from one aspect of the theory of Individual Psychology which bears a close resemblance to what is asked of the listener when he hears a fairy tale. Adler wrote often of the "most expedient lie" unique to each individual and adopted by every person at an age when the belief itself can scarcely be articulated and its implications are impossible to sketch. The "lie" is a lie because the young human organism's experience is very limited and whatever approach to life is adopted must provide a level of courage or comfort in a situation of perceived (and initially actual) inferiority. Because it is impossible to proceed at all without some stance towards life, the infant unwittingly adopts the necessarily limited but most convenient approach dictated by nature and nurture which becomes "the most expedient lie". This all important lie grows into a cluster of behaviours and outlooks which determine the "style" of

the person, that is the basic premises and assumptions on which the person's psychological movement through life is based.

Adler also referred to the expedient lie as a fiction. Because it is formulated in a condition of perceived inadequacy and because we are dynamic beings, there is always a goal associated with it. Our early inadequacies make us dependant on others. To live in a manner which ensures continued survival and meets our needs, we must impress ourselves upon others, particularly adults. From this necessity grows the social sense of the individual. In this process the lie of expediency may be threatened. Adjustments to its formulation or the ways its goals are pursued may be necessary. If contradictions become too pronounced and reality threatens the personal fiction, safeguarding tactics may be undertaken in an attempt to protect the individual's goals and assumptions. According to Adler, safeguarding and denial of this sort often mark the genesis of neurosis.

Essential as the guiding fiction may be, it can also become a confining straight jacket, thwarting its own goals. If the confinement is not overwhelming, the individual will seek ways to compensate for its tendency as in the cases of organ inferiority exemplified above. Compensation applies, often successfully, to psychological inhibition as well as to physical handicap. However, sometimes the lifestyle is totally self-defeating and the expedient lie proves far from expedient in the long run. Then an intervention is required either to encourage persistence in efforts to compensate, or to present an incentive to restructure the lifestyle, to adopt a more effective, more expedient lie - a better lie but no less a fiction.

There is an existential radicalism implicit in Adler's position. And Adler's radicalism is profoundly creative as it establishes a remarkable relationship between reality and creativity, a relationship which is both

liberating and frightening, for it concludes it is only one's own fictionalized reality which can govern one's own behaviour, since one's reality is of one's own making. The echo of this primal capability is heard in the magic of the fairy tale, particularly as it is placed in the hands of the protagonist who discovers the magical power to forge his or her own fate.

In the context of the individual's guiding fiction, the fairy tale is peculiarly suited to play a constructive and creative role. I intend to address the crux of that contention and to deal with it more comprehensively through the remainder of this thesis. As Freud had before, Adler recognized personality could only be known indirectly. The psyche, after all, is a process, not a tangible substance, and must be described through metaphor. Some would say the self is therefore only a wraith and has no reality. The less dogmatic empiricists suggest that since it is apprehended only subjectively, the self probably exists in some sense, but has no objective, no real reality. Freud understood the demonstrative difficulties posed by the concepts of personal ψ but countered with the evidence of years of clinical account. The persistence of singular patterns of behaviour, the symmetry of dream symbolism and the increasingly predictable response of the patient to the process of psychoanalysis may present difficult material but it is undeniably real proof of structured, comprehensible, sentient beings.

Adler, likewise a practicing psychiatrist, learned of the psyche from first hand clinical involvement and would hardly deny the impact of its existence on the external world. But Adler believed above all that the meaning of the self was ultimately subjective and that its significance was rendered incomprehensible when reduced to a discharge of energies within the personality structure or a system of organismic responses. Adler based his practise and theory on the influence of the subjective and not the

behaviourist's observations nor the presumed unconscious self. He believed what mattered to the patient or client was the determining factor in therapy.

Art appeals by its nature to the subjective self and values the individual's own interpretation of events in his or her own life. A prevalent recurring theme in fairy tales is the perseverance of the hero against prevailing assessments. In the chapters which follow fantasy and heroism are regarded from both Freud's and Adler's viewpoints, broadly and through the insights provided by particular fairy tales. A thesis of this kind can be regarded as pure criticism or as applied psychology. In the once forbidden woods we now enter, such distinctions may well be academic.

CHAPTER 2

THE PSYCHOANALYTIC ARGUMENT FOR THE VALUE OF THE FAIRY TALE

The Unconscious and the material of the fairy tale

In The Interpretation of Dreams Freud wrote:

But the great respect with which ancient peoples regarded dreams is based upon a just piece of psychological divination. It is a homage paid to the unsubdued and indestructible element in the human soul, to the *daemonic* power which furnishes the dream-wish, and which we have found again *in our unconscious*.¹

The italics are Freud's, a fair indication of the importance he gave the association of dreams with the unconscious. In using the evocative term *daemonic* Freud conjures an image of unwanted possession, of uncontrolled, unbidden pictures with a compelling force upon the psyche. The substance of Freud's dream theory, that of wish fulfillment, is paradoxically dependent upon this sense of involuntary desire and upon the existence of a real and active part of the mind he named the unconscious.

Psychoanalysis, as both theory and practice, derives, at least historically, its *raison d'être* from this hypothesis of the unconscious. Freud's own empiricism dictated that the soul must reveal itself, however strangely, through the behavior of the individual and through personal emotions reflected in conversation and other expressions. But Freud diverged from common belief and the assumptions of his predecessors in concluding the

¹ Sigmund Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams," Basic Writings (New York : Random House, 1938) 541.

manifest or overt presentation of the psyche does not tell a self-evident tale. The testament of Freud's work is that the whole mind, particularly including the unconscious component, requires extensive analysis and interpretation to be properly understood.

The most obvious evidence of need for reconciliation of apparent behavioural contradictions or dissociations is the acute disturbance of mental illness. Yet Freud maintained that in this respect, the mentally ill are not unique. Among the psychologically disturbed, the disparity between demonstrated understanding and unexpected behavior surfaces more dramatically, but their theatricality simply underscores the universal condition:

An important conclusion can be drawn from this combination: the peculiar mode of operation, whose most striking function we recognize in the dream content, should not be attributed only to the sleeping state of the psychic life, when we possess abundant proof of its activity during the waking state in faulty actions. The same connection also forbids us from assuming that these psychic processes which impress us as abnormal and strange, are determined by deep-seated decay of psychic activity or by morbid state of function.²

The practice of Psychoanalysis developed as Freud found the early tool of hypnosis presented numerous shortcomings in both diagnosis and treatment. However, "the talking cure" only came to be preferred by Freud when he simultaneously realized both the omnipresence and accessibility of unconscious phenomena. Freud's method as both clinician and scholar resembled the critic's approach: a gradual uncovering and painstaking examination of each inconsistent piece of behaviour or explanation until a

² Sigmund Freud, "The Psychopathology of Everyday Life," Basic Writings (New York: Random House, 1938) 177.

place could be found for it in a larger mosaic.

Eventually a global picture of the structure and dynamics of personality formed. Nevertheless, Freud would continue to refine his theories throughout his lifetime, methodically reviewing each new piece of evidence for new implications. But at the same time, he resisted vigorously any perceived threat to the underpinnings of his theory. For Freud the unconscious would remain such an underpinning.

If dreams are the royal road to the unconscious, daydreams, fantasy and imaginative literature are not far off the track. In On Creativity and the Unconscious Freud outlined the connections he wanted to establish between dreams and daydreams, between daydreams and phantasy and between phantasy and creative works.³ Daydreams are the conscious equivalent of the unbidden visions of night. Furthermore, they are often conspicuous examples of wish projection. Early signs of daydreams emerge in the play of children. In creating an imaginative world through play, the child takes the things of this world which vex or frustrate and channels energy to envisage a more desired arrangement.

Daydreams, according to Freud, are an interesting halfway house in two important senses. They fall between unconscious dreams which are the reality of the sleeper, and phantasies which are consciously chosen images of fictional happenings known to be only fictional. The lines between daydreaming and phantasy are deliberately blurred because the self wants it that way. Most of us want to harness the demonic amoral drives of the unconscious id to the regulating harness of the conscious ego. The other sense

³ "The Poet and Day-Dreaming," On Creativity and the Unconscious. (New York: Harper, 1958) 44.

in which the daydream serves as a halfway house is by interposing itself as a stage between the play of the child and the creative formulation of the poet. As Freud saw it : " The opposite of play is not serious occupation but - reality ." ⁴ This opposition does not disappear with maturity. Reality retains its role and refuses to go away, but play becomes a serious counterbalancing occupation with or without the creative elements of childhood phantasy.

Freud observed that uncomfortable blockages and unfortunate symptoms emerge when adults feel compelled to stop investing psychic energy in their imagined or cathected objects of desire. The poet differs from the neurotic in recognizing that the wish can prepare a healthy transition from pleasure to reality. If for no other reason than that poetry and fiction express the distinction between desire and truth they would be valuable. But the creative output of the writer also serves as a conduit to channel the creative energy of the reader from unconscious accumulation to conscious direction.

For Freud, the parallel between phantasy and literature can be observed in the explication of a common day-dream :

Take the case of a poor orphan lad to whom you have given the address of some employer where he may perhaps get work. On the way there he falls into a day-dream suitable to the situation from which it springs. The content of the phantasy will be somewhat as follows: He is taken on and pleases his new employer, makes himself indispensable in the business, is taken into the family of the employer, and marries the charming daughter of the house. Then he comes to conduct the business, first as a partner, and then as successor to his father-in law. In this way the dreamer regains what he had in his happy childhood, the protecting house, his loving parents and the first objects of his affection. You will see from such an example how the wish employs

⁴ Freud, " The Poet " 44.

some event in the present to plan a future on the pattern of the past.⁵

According to Freud, there is another sense in which the phantasy or day-dream functions as a half-way house. Over-elaboration and preoccupation with such phantasies is often coincident with the onset of significant neurotic symptoms. This is appreciable when neurosis is viewed as basically a delay in healthy personal development. The neurotic, unable to act creatively on phantasy and move to realize legitimate desires, defensively amasses a profusion of detail, thus obscuring the original point.

Of striking significance is the remarkable similarity of the typical day-dream such as the example related above, to the typical structure of the fairy tale. Countless tales from every tradition begin with a disadvantaged protagonist in a difficult position faced with or soon to face a crisis. Often the stakes are high but usually rewards are reaped when a challenging task is successfully completed. The tale of "Jack and the Beanstalk" is a reasonable example of this kind of straightforward pattern in folk narrative.

Boys and men tend to day-dream more about success in ambitious pursuits; girls and women are more given to romantic reverie.⁶ These tendencies are reflected in fairy tales also. Heroines reap their rewards more often as a result of success in love; heroes are rewarded with the princess' hand after the challenge is won and advances in material wealth and status have been made. Nevertheless, there are exceptions for both heroes and heroines. The Goose Girl and Cinderella must work at burdensome labour before they are rewarded with love while the Beast of "Beauty and the Beast" is imprisoned in animal form until redeemed by love. Folk wisdom teaches that

⁵ Freud, "The Poet" 49.

⁶ Freud, "The Poet" 47-48.

both love and work are tasks to be undertaken by members of both sexes.

Like the day-dream, the fairy tale unites past, present and future. There is always a sense of a more just state of affairs which once existed or should have, and of a current danger which also provides an opportunity to restore the rightful order by working it out through the story. In providing this pattern of resolution in a wonderful variety of imaginative forms, the fairy tale endows childhood with a deep reservoir of confidence.⁷ This is a kind of invaluable truth which Bettelheim credits Tolkien with appreciating.⁸ The truth of fairy tales is psychic not literal. The child does not literally believe in dragons but believes implicitly in insatiable, outlandish danger and the fear that the danger inspires. Fairy tales reflect the child's irrational feelings in a way recollected experience of the day to day world never can. Always beyond the perimeter of the known world, in the reaches of the unconscious, are territories undeniably beset by dragons and ruled by magic.

The sense of make believe or if you prefer - suspension of disbelief, establishes a fluid environment in which energies and tensions bound up by earlier association can be released to build new worlds perhaps closer to reality, perhaps closer to the soul's centre. This theory is cathartic, a very purposeful catharsis. Freud's vocabulary differs but there are clearly familiar elements in his theory of imagination drawn from traditional critical theory. The outstanding contribution of Psychoanalysis to literature has probably not been its elaborate vocabulary, but Psychoanalysis has helped explain how

⁷ Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (New York: Vintage Books, 1977) 3.

⁸ Bettelheim, Uses 117.

important the aesthetic process is to the total psychic life of both children and adults:

The increment of pleasure which is offered us in order to release yet greater pleasure arising from deeper sources in the mind is called an 'incitement premium' or technically 'fore-pleasure'. I am of opinion that all the aesthetic pleasure we gain from the works of imaginative writers is the same type as this 'fore-pleasure', and that the true enjoyment of literature proceeds from the release of tensions in our minds. Perhaps much that brings about this result consists in the writer's putting us into a position in which we can enjoy our own day-dreams without reproach or shame.⁹

Freud's personality theory is in large part concerned with the ways in which this reproach or shame arises and how the evolving psyche deals with the burden. To understand more fully his concepts on these subjects we need to examine Freud's ideas about childhood development and personality structure.

Freudian principles and instinctual life

When the Church persecuted Galileo for taking our world away from its position at the centre of the universe, it was reacting to only the first of three great blows to human vanity Freud believed were delivered by the scientific revolution. The second was Darwin's demotion of mankind to the lineage of the animal kingdom. The third, Freud claimed, was recognition that man's emotional life is controlled by unconscious drives or instincts. All our impulses are explained as emerging from the irrational insitencies of infancy, and barely to be controlled by the demands of civilization. Thus would Psychoanalysis dispense with free will.

Psychoanalysis as a theory is characterized by other features besides its determinism. Freud's view of the mind is topographic. That is, he has assigned to consciousness a kind of geography. Mental events are categorized by their

⁹ Freud, "The Poet" 54.

relative accessibility or proximity to the surface of awareness. Consequently, the placing of an event in the centre of consciousness or deep within the unconscious is not a chance act according to Psychoanalysis. In this sense, Freudian psychology is dynamic. The drives actively force the attention of the mind on certain acceptable emotions and repress other unruly elements into the unconscious. Finally, Psychoanalysis is a genetic theory in the sense that the boy is father to the man. The early events of childhood interacting with the ordinary phases of biological development leave an indelible, unique trace on the growth and differentiation of personality. ¹⁰

Freud's determinism gives Bettelheim's theory of the fairy tale, which consistently relies on the notion of unconscious appeal, a curious inflexible quality which contrasts with the dynamic of the personality theory from which it derives. Whether we accept Freud's conscious/unconscious divisions or not, we now mostly do concede the dynamic variability of human motivation. Similarly, post-Freudian thought regards more traditionally static concepts such as character, with greater skepticism. In current writing, personalities depicted as being in conflict within themselves often follow Freudian patterns. Another literary symptom of the Freudian influence would be the emergence of the stream of consciousness technique as a device for depicting personality.

An examination of Bettelheim's examples as illustrations of oral, anal and oedipal phases

For most readers, the hardest of all Freud's constellation of concepts to accept is his psychosexual model of human development. It is not so much the reality of infantile progression from oral to anal to oedipal stages of

¹⁰ Corsini, Raymond J., " Psychoanalysis, " Current Psychotherapies (Itasca : F. E. Peacock) 11-12.

development which is questioned, but rather the intense crucial emphasis Psychoanalysis gives to these phases. On this issue Adler actually broke with Freud in pursuit of a more broadly based psychology. But for Bettelheim in his book on fairy tales, Freud's psychosexual phases associated with major body orifices and with major crises of early childhood development, are a formative factor.¹¹

The first phase of human instinctive life is referred to as the oral phase. From birth to eighteen months the child is preoccupied with satisfying needs associated with the mouth, lips, tongue etc. The world is simplistically differentiated between the good which is taken in and the bad which is expelled. Oral needs are expressed orally. If they are frequently frustrated the individual develops a pessimistic outlook, if satisfied, optimistic.

The fairy tale Bettelheim has chosen to show the depiction of orality, is "The Three Little Pigs". He begins by showing the difference between fairy tales and fables then cites the exemplary story of "The Grasshopper and the Ant". The fable leaves no doubt about its message: the characters are judged by the sternest of realities. When Walt Disney animated this fable, it is interesting to note that his writers modified the cruel condemnation of the queen ant to equal a new lease on life for the grasshopper. When she tells the grasshopper in the traditional version, " Since you could sing all summer, you can dance all winter.", she means to exclude him from the colony. In the Disney version the grasshopper is allowed to perform for his supper. The Disney studios have been criticized for the horrific scenes they have sometimes depicted. But this moral was too strong, even for their standards.

¹¹ Corsini 12.

A good fairy tale, Bettelheim might say, works like psychoanalytic treatment. The instinctive life, past and present is exposed to a degree and the patient is invited to make what he will of it. If the theme seems too strong it may be abandoned or repressed into the unconscious. Likewise in therapy, the patient is invited to explore the consequences of his choices between the pleasure principle and the reality principle - past, present and future. Of course, whether the reality of the reality principle conforms to the way the world is, remains to be seen. The consequences of suppressing rather than resolving the demands of our drives are manifest later through the neuroses that Psychoanalysis attempts to treat.

According to orthodox Psychoanalysis, from the middle of the second year to the age of three, the child derives most of its libidinal pleasure from the retention and passing of feces. This second, anal phase of development coincides with the child's expanded contact with the world. The senses are engaged and the child's interaction takes the form of deciding what shall be retained and what shall be excreted. At first the child believes his stool is an extrusion of himself and may experience shame when adults condemn his fascination with his bowel movement. Toilet training is the crisis of this period and unsatisfactory resolution of the anal phase is said to lead to a reaction of stubborn assertiveness, contrary rebelliousness and the determination to be in control. Curiously, through a defensive process known as reaction formation, the child may become meticulously clean, punctual and parsimonious. In this way he may attempt to deny the mark of his shame.¹²

Bettelheim is less forthcoming in pinpointing examples among the literature of fairy tales which address this phase of childhood development.

¹² Corsini 13.

He does observe that the giant's sack of gold in "Jack the Giant Killer" is symbolic of the need to pass beyond this stage of development.¹³ Bettelheim does not emphasize anality as he does orality although the phase is recognizable in Bettelheim's work as a description of changing attitudes or behaviours. He discusses the need for the child to differentiate himself from external reality and to find confidence in his ability to use and depend upon his own body. The child will soon use this confident distinctive contact with the outside environment to externalize chaotic, confusing internal feelings as he will also become overconfident of his corporeal capability to cope with the frightening aspects of life. Fairy tales help in this process, consistently advocating self-reliance as Bettelheim has noted.

Infancy ends when the belief in an unending supply of love and nutriment proves to be an unrealistic fantasy. Childhood begins with an equally unrealistic belief in what the child's own body in general, and specifically one aspect of it - his newly discovered sexual equipment - can achieve for him.¹⁴

After the third year the child enters the phallic or oedipal phase of development where libidinal interest shifts to the genitals. This is also a period of differentiation although the child remains predominantly self-centered throughout this phase. The child in the phallic stage begins to recognize the importance of the distinction between the sexes, takes exhibitionistic pleasure in showing off his or her own body and voyeuristic delight from the bodies of others. During this stage, the child who previously scarcely distinguished himself from those around him now develops strong attachments to those who give pleasure and hatred for those who frustrate.

¹³ Bettelheim 193.

¹⁴ Bettelheim, Uses 187.

Freud theorized that girls might be hampered in the phallic phase in discovering they lacked penises. Further complications for female children would arise in the disruption of their once secure relationships with their mothers who would now become imagined rivals in their fantasized relationships with their fathers. On the other hand many boys would similarly develop a fear of the female genitals during the same period.

Bettleheim interprets a large number of fairy tales from the standpoint of their phallic content for the child. "In Snow White", the evil stepmother queen represents at the same time the unconscious rivalry an oedipal child senses between herself and the parent of the same sex, the distorting perspective of jealousy and the fruits of unchecked desire.

In "Snow White" the vain, jealous and destructive queen is forced to put on red-hot shoes in which she must dance until she dies. Untrammelled sexual jealousy, which tries to ruin others, destroys itself- as symbolized not only by the fiery red shoes but by death from dancing in them. Symbolically, the story tells that uncontrolled passion must be restrained or it will become one's undoing. Only the death of the jealous queen (the elimination of all outer and inner turbulence) can make for a happy world.¹⁵

Similarly dramatized oedipal material is evidenced with different emphases in "Sleeping Beauty". In this tale the sexuality is itself symbolized again by a small wound that draws blood and which stands for menstruation and probably by extension for the sacrifice of virginity. The consequences of sexual awakening are confusing and overwhelming. This reality is represented by the sleep which overtakes the heroines in these tales. But the vantage point in "Sleeping Beauty" is different. The princess' entire kingdom falls into suspended animation and the fairy who casts the spell is not associated with any parental role. In "Cinderella" the wicked stepmother

¹⁵ Bettleheim, Uses 214.

appears again, representing the epitome of unresolved parental oedipal jealousy. Still, Cinderella's unjust degradation is fully seen only in comparison of her lot with that of her stepsisters. Cinderella is consequently also a tale which addresses the issue of sibling rivalry and the natural but narcissistic sense that one's position in the family is less than it should be. Bettelheim shows us in interpreting "Jack in the Beanstalk" how a mother who misunderstands the need for her son to make his own way and his own mistakes inadvertently prevents the fulfillment of her own wishes for both him and herself. Fortunately the gullible boy disregards her wisdom. The boy who identifies with Jack can read from this (at a level below consciousness) that he must go beyond both his infantile and oedipal attachments to his mother and that he must learn to trust his own ego even when its needs seem foolish.

Bettelheim explains his concerns regarding the perils of the world of emotion and relationships which impinge upon the child but are ordinarily incomprehensible to the three year old who has neither the cognitive nor emotional experience to grasp their significance consciously. According to Psychoanalysis many risks to the young ego well up from the unconscious, especially during this third phase. As they touch upon the most serious taboos of our society and threaten the safety of family life, incestuous feelings towards the parent of the opposite sex aroused during the phallic phase are especially threatening. In the healthy development of the child these urges are eventually understood and redirected. The animal groom series of tales, exemplified by "Beauty and the Beast", demonstrates successful transference of originally incestuous oedipal urges to a suitable lover.

At some level, the animality of the Beast is intuitively recognized by the child as a symbol of his own animal, that is sexual, nature. Redemption of the

Beast is unappealing, even fearful but becomes a matter of filial duty. Freud's concept of Oedipal urges offers an explanation for the connection between the beast and the parent. In the story, the external transformation of the beast, who must first be understood within, foreshadows the transformation of oedipal urges to mature sexuality. If there is any truth in the construct of the Oedipus complex and the underlying development processes it implies, the animal groom tales must bring words of profound comfort to young ears.

In the psychoanalytic scheme the three phases of libidinal development are followed by a period of latency during which character structures formed earlier become embedded. Adolescence follows and then maturity. It is easy to see a comforting value for the child in stories which emphasize overcoming of phase transition crises. Fairy tales which emblemize such experiences for children remain favorites throughout childhood and even lifetimes.¹⁶

Furthermore, the endurance through uncouthed generations of folktales which relate worlds long past into history or legend suggests an importance of very great magnitude. But it is more than nostalgia which gives the folktale its continuing attraction to the maturing child. Fairy tales have a luminescence which does not fade with repetition. Though it is not within the scope of this thesis to examine the phenomenon, traces, fragments and whole folktales can be found throughout the body of world literature attesting to their persistent appeal. How does Psychoanalysis finally explain the enduring magnetism of fairy tales which draws children to them long past the years of crisis? To understand this we must again return to the singular, mysterious construct of Freud's theory which we began this chapter by raising: the question of the unconscious.

¹⁶ Bettelheim, Uses 5.

CHAPTER 3

THE ADLERIAN APPROACH TO FAIRY TALES

The basic premises of Individual Psychology

Alfred Adler like Carl Jung was part of Freud's Vienna Society which he joined as a practicing Viennese psychiatrist in the first decade of the century. He acknowledged his debt to Freud as the founder of depth psychology. However, with Adler's departure from the psychoanalytic circle in 1911, the extent to which they had diverged from one another became dramatically apparent. Over the years, Freud himself would revise psychoanalytic theory becoming, in effect, a neo-Freudian. Like Adler, Horney and Fromm, the founder of Psychoanalysis came to place more importance on the organizing function of the ego or self and less upon a determining role for the unconscious id and super ego. Despite his changing orientation, Freud's biologically-based determinism remained intact. Freud's accusation that Adler's psychology is mainly an ego psychology has some validity, but Adler's self is very different from Freud's ego.¹

In his earlier formulations, Freud hypothesized that the primitive, instinctive portion of personality - the 'id', was largely unconscious. The 'ego', on the other hand, was to be considered the self we most clearly identify with, conscious, rational, a courageous warrior against the dark forces within. Bettelheim observes that even the term ego is a poor rendering of Freud's original German. A better translation would be to call this portion of the

¹ Adler (New York: Basic Books, 1956) 17.

person the 'I'. As Bettelheim explains in Freud and Man's Soul, the more closely the patient can identify with this self, the better the commitment to the cure and therefore the better the prognosis for the analysis:

So, when Freud names the reasonable, conscious aspects of our mind the I, we feel subtly flattered that our real I is what we most value in ourselves. It gives us the intuitive feeling that Freud is right to name the I what we feel to be our true self, even though we know we do not always act in line with that self. Since that part of us, psychoanalytically speaking, is named the I, we are enticed to side with it in its struggle against the irrational, infantile, entirely selfish aspects of ourselves. In a subtle way, this choice of name for the conscious aspects of our mind strengthens our determination to win the battle against the chaos caused by the irrational in us. During psychoanalytic treatment, that determination - that siding of the patient's I with the efforts of the therapist - alone can lead to success in dealing with the dark forces within us.²

Freud's critique of Adler hinged largely on the latter's rejection of psychosexual constructs as the foundation of personality. However, Freud also expressed disapproval of Adler's emphasis upon the unity of self in all behavior and dismissed that concept as the hallmark of a shallow, ego psychology and therefore, by implication, an indifference to the power of the unconscious.³ A dozen years later clinical experience would lead Freud to revise his description of the ego:

In the structural picture of the mind what had from the first been most clearly differentiated from 'the unconscious' had been 'the ego'. And it now began to appear that the ego itself ought partly to be described as 'unconscious'. This was pointed out in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in a sentence which reads in the first edition (1920 g) : 'It may be that much of the ego is itself unconscious ; only a small part of it is covered by

² Bruno Bettelheim, Freud and Man's Soul, (New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 1982) 55.

³ Heinz Ansbacher and Rowena Ansbacher eds., Alfred Adler : Superiority and Social Interest (Evanston : Northwestern University Press, 1964) 10.

the term "preconscious".⁴

As the boundaries of the domain of the unconscious became more unclear, Freud also began to employ the term unconscious more as an adjective than a noun. This had been and remained Adler's consistent practice. In practice also, Individual Psychologists prefer the term 'unadmitted' over 'unconscious' to avoid reification of a dubious hypothetical construct. Latterly, other psychoanalysts have also painted a picture of the self resembling Adler's vision even more closely. Under the force of repression and the guarded rigidity of neurosis, the boundaries of consciousness and unconscious may seem to be compulsively observed. Adler found the distinction between consciousness and the unconscious depended on attention most of the time. An analogy might be of a driver who concentrates on directional signs and cues rather than the passing scenery. Of course, the driver may concentrate on the wrong cues or forget to concentrate or become distracted by the roadside. However, correct or not, what the driver sees become conscious landmarks and what remains a blur is the unconscious background:

We cannot oppose "consciousness" to "unconsciousness" as if they were two antagonistic halves of an individual's existence. The conscious life becomes unconscious as soon as we fail to understand it, and as soon as we understand an unconscious tendency it has already become conscious.⁵

The initial tenor of Freud's psychology is still recognizable in the work of his successors. However, the focus of Psychoanalysis remains the objectification of behavior under a biological umbrella even conceding more

⁴ Sigmund Freud, "Editor's Note", The Ego and the Id, (London : Hogarth Press, 1923) xii.

⁵ Ansbacher, Individual 233.

importance to a 'subjective' ego, according it all the qualities of the traditional self.⁶ Ironically, for the advocates of Individual Psychology, distinctively Adlerian concepts became harder to express clearly against the changing backdrop of psychoanalytic theory. For Adler's theory is recognized by the general educated community only as it differs from Freudian doctrine. Therefore, as those distinctions gradually moderated with psychoanalytic development, the perceived blurring of distinctions meant Individual Psychology would be honoured more in practice but less in principle. Nevertheless, as will be shown, the theoretical distinctions between the two schools remain crucially important to general philosophical, aesthetic and critical interpretation, however academic clinical or diagnostic differences have become. Consequently, a statement of the fundamental precepts of Individual Psychology may prove useful to this discussion. See: Appendix A.

In Individual Psychology, the struggle for organic wholeness is primal. Ordinarily, striving for superiority is initiated as a consequence of perceived imperfection, of a net inferiority. For every individual, life's challenges or tasks present a practical dilemma. Should the individual take on the challenge and risk heightening the feeling of inferiority in the event of failure, or should one decline the task only to have the sense of inferiority confirmed? Adler observed that a moment of crisis for everyone comes whenever this decision must be made. However, the decisive factor which leads to taking on challenge may be social interest stemming from courage, the willingness to risk defeat in order to cooperate in attaining a common goal (or quest) rather than the pressure of fear of failure.

⁶ Freud, Ego xiii.

Sometimes of course, the individual is simply not ready for the task. To sustain hope until the risk taker is ready, the sense of self must be preserved by an invented or discovered fiction (like a fairy tale) in which the currently impossible dream is fulfilled. A temporary escape to fantasy is preferable when the alternatives are to struggle in an antisocial or criminal manner or to withdraw into defeat and despair. Furthermore, as discussed in earlier chapters, imaginative flight which restores the individual's courage to approach reality is an obvious benefit of great value. To succeed one must proceed as if success were assured. As Adler said in advising educators, one must assume capability not disability. The assumption of faith in the meaningfulness of life is present in the atmosphere of fairy tales. Bettelheim regrets the failure of modern writers to replicate this compelling atmosphere, thereby discouraging the young reader in the act of reading itself:

We all tend to assess the future merits of an activity on the basis of what it offers now. But this is especially true for the child, who, much more than the adult, lives in the present and, although he has anxieties about his future, has only the vaguest notions of what it may require or be like. The idea that learning to read may enable one later to enrich one's life is experienced as an empty promise when the stories the child listens to, or is reading at the moment, are vacuous. The worst feature of these children's books is that they cheat the child of what he ought to gain from the experience of literature: access to deeper meaning, and that which is meaningful to him at his stage of development.⁷

Paradoxically, the immediate benefit of the fairy tale is long term commitment to reading. Although the old tale are very accessible, their appeal is that they exhibit a depth which is more interesting than much modern, literal material dominating the reading shelf. For the fairy tale,

⁷ Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment : The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (New York: Vintage Books, 1977) 4.

offers more than diversion. It beckons towards the experiences which nourish the full development of personhood. And it does so in a manner which is neither pedantic nor dictatorial. The fairy tale is oblique in its signification, encouraging the full participation of the child's imagination to interpret. The fairy tale is real literature, thriving on analogies and comparisons which extend far beyond its obvious, conventional environs:

The healing value of fairy tales can best be seen in children who often because of parental influences, have prematurely grown skeptical and thereby bored, discouraged, listless or depressed, as well as in children who, quite early, have become withdrawn and insecure, fearful and distrustful because of too many hurts. Here the fairy tale, offered lovingly and delightfully, can become a fountain of youth, reviving the courage and the interest to meet the future.⁸

In the next chapter an Adlerian reading of the fairy tale is undertaken using several of the same tales Bettelheim has interpreted psychoanalytically for The Uses of Enchantment. For Adlerians would agree with Bettelheim that the body of familiar fairy tales is an enriching source of material which ensures early worthwhile reading experiences.

Many would concur with the author of the above passage that fairy tales have therapeutic potential. But most would further argue with Tolkien that what makes this material so meaningful to most young readers is not a mysterious, somnambulistic process but development of a more fully conscious, lucid outlook:

And actually fairy-stories deal largely, or (the better ones) mainly with simple or fundamental things, untouched by Fantasy, but these simplicities are made all the more luminous by their setting. For the story-maker who allows himself to be 'free with' Nature can be her lover not her slave. It was in

⁸ Heuscher, A Psychiatric Study of Myths and Fairy Tales (Springfield: Chas. Thomas, 1974) 293.

fairy-stories that I first divined the potency of the words, and the wonder of the things, such as stone, and wood, and iron; tree and grass; house and fire; bread and wine.⁹

Freud and Adler - objective versus subjective depth psychology

Adler's early work was predictably influenced by Freud's approach. The inferiority complex, for instance, surfaced in early studies of the effects of organ inferiority. This early biological bias also derives from Adler's medical background as well as from Freud's determination to encourage his associates always to derive psychological theory from physiological origins. This is perhaps the one aspect of Individual Psychology which links it more with the 'objective' psychoanalytic schools than with its more typical 'subjective' orientation.

In his later writing, Adler refers to *feelings* of inferiority rather than to organ inferiority. He soon recognized that physical evidence of compensation for physical defect moves quickly into the realm of attitude. Perceived personality weaknesses are also compensated for in the individual's approach to life. For, as in the case of physical infirmity, compensation for personality weakness is undertaken in the service of the self in a direct, reflexive way and at a response level which makes it invisible to consciousness. Because the compensatory mechanism is so central to the individual's adaptation, it is indistinguishable to the self and forms the unquestioned, basic but naive reality of the individual. Adler observed that neurotic, rigid, supposedly entrenched behaviour could be changed instantly and radically to defend the goal of the individual. From this perspective, Adler would see the unconscious defence mechanisms identified by Freud as neither integral to 'ego' nor as distinct from it. Both the identity of the self and the

⁹ J. R. R. Tolkien, Tree and Leaf, Smith of Wootton Major, The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth (London : Unwin Books, 1964) 60.

defence of the self are established by the self. This is another sense in which Adler's orientation is subjective.

Adler observed that each individual of necessity constructs an individual universe whose uniqueness begins with a compensatory defence against a perceived inferiority. In the vast majority of the population, 'reality' conforms fairly closely to a logic of common sense. But, because memory also contains both imperfect and unique adaptations and compensations, every individual also carries personal assumptions which function as a 'private logic' from which the 'fictional' goal in life grows. Everyone maintains a personal phenomenological field which operates at least partially on private logic oriented towards a singular fictive objective. However, the subjectivity of the personal world can be easily observed only where it deviates from commonly held principles or values. Adler, like Freud, drew his first insights into human nature by observing abnormal responses and inferring from such reactions the striking and peculiar 'logic' behind them.

Jung criticized Adler's psychology linking it with Freud's for presenting a pathological concept of personality. However, this critique applies only to the early Adler. Adler's growth as both theorist and practitioner moved him away from the medical model towards an educational model and the use of ordinary language over jargon culminating in the unprecedented involvement of the client in determining his own treatment. Jung's criticism of Adler's early theories was therefore addressed in the growth of Individual Psychology as it diverged from a pathological orientation. Paradoxically, Individual Psychology became a far more comprehensive general psychology in accounting for each individual with

specific idiographic laws.¹⁰

Adler's subjective approach has a philosophical as well as an empirical dimension. As noted above, Adler's work is paralleled by similar discoveries and convictions among other humanistic psychologists. Adler, however, not only argued for the dignity of the personal viewpoint, but also for its inevitability. From the pragmatic perspective of Individual Psychology, each of us must live constantly in the hypothetical. Every belief system is still just that. To put it pointedly, there is an existential sharpness to Adler's restatement of Descartes' *cogito*.

Philosophical analysis or systematic meditation can uncover many questionable assumptions and clarify the extent to which anyone can claim knowledge. But there will never be enough time available or effort expended to uncover all the assumptions. We live 'as if', in a fictional world we continually create. It is a world which relies on convention and prototype, on bountiful supplies of information but also extensive use of the tools of imagination:

What the naive, uninstructed, childlike or illusion-ridden viewer accepts as 'real' a more knowledgeable and emancipated one sees to be a carefully planned show, and planned within the framework of a literary convention. It follows that the journey towards one's own identity, which literature does so much to help with, has a great deal to do with escaping from the alleged 'reality' of what one is reading or looking at, and recognizing the convention behind it. The same process exists on the elementary teaching of literature, or should. The child should not 'believe' the story he is told; he should not disbelieve it either, but send out imaginative roots into that mysterious world between the 'is' and the 'is not' which is where his own ultimate freedom lies.¹¹

¹⁰ Ansbacher, Individual 4.

¹¹ Northrop Frye, The Secular Scripture : A Study of the Structure of Romance (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976) 166.

At the level of experience, creativity is reality. The complexity and confusing immediacy of actual experience means we are unable to grasp consciously the overall fluidity of the situations we make for ourselves. In defense, we establish mechanisms aimed at shielding the self from the vulnerability or at least masking the anxiety this complexity creates. Adlerians refer to this defence as compensation. For the Adlerians, compensatory defense includes all the mechanisms originally identified by Freud. These comprise: compensation, conversion, denial, displacement, dissociation, fantasy, identification, introjection, negativism, projection, rationalization, reaction formation, regression, repression, sublimation, and undoing.¹² We will review their expression in more detail later.

Defense mechanisms are all used to some extent by every personality to protect the fictive goal from unpleasant facts. Yet, an examination of the fairy tale discloses an interesting reversal. In the fairy tale all of these devices sometimes succeed in the context of 'once upon a time' when even the young child knows they fail him daily. Cleft by make-believe, a pathway of hope between innocence and experience emerges like a clearing in the woods. The eventually debilitating 'magic' of the defence mechanisms can be lightheartedly abandoned as it is harmlessly indulged through the spells and charms of a world which is more real in the sense that it reflects the child's own inner order. More direct evidence of this phenomenon is examined later in this paper.

In seeing this value in fairy tales Bettelheim and the Adlerians would be generally in agreement. But Adler's theory departs radically in two important

¹² Walter J. Coville, Timothy W. Costello and Fabian L. Rouke, Abnormal Psychology (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1960) 57.

senses from the Freudians, most of the neo-Freudians, ego psychologists and even the Lacanians. In deploying the reactive mechanisms of defence, the personality is also creating its own style and values. The individual's adaptation to the world is inevitably flawed and biased through the intermediary life style. If it were perfect, we might all live forever. But some form of adaptation is vital for survival. As time passes, the maturing individual constructs a more elaborate censorship of personal ideology to sustain and protect the beleaguered self from the anxious misgivings of unflattering examination. How rigid and enclosing the personal ideology becomes, depends significantly on the creative resources the child has garnered from early encounters with the unsophisticated revelations of literature he can and wants to understand. In Psychoanalytic terms, the issue is how ego-centred the personality has or has not become.

Adler shared the perspectives of Psychoanalysis on the role of personal defence mechanisms in denying the sense of inferiority. However, Adler saw the boundaries which must be broken down not as internal and invisible, but as external and visible. The self, as understood by Individual Psychology is strengthened, oriented and made real by the encouragement of interest in the society of responsive fellow human beings, not by a descent into the ambiguous chaos of the unconscious. Ironically, for the self-centred neurotic, Hell is imagined as other people - because it is a frightening, unexplored world. Therapists, Adlerians believe, must have profound empathy for their clients. But they must disagree with their clients totally on their negative assessments of their own artificially constricted and ostensibly dangerous worlds. There are real risks and hazards in life, enough that we need not augment them with destructive fantasies. The message of Adler, which reinforces the basic theme of the fairy tale, is that there are also

unimaginable benefits to be won by embracing our kinship with nature and our fellow human beings.

Elaborate measures of personal defence are learned early because, by the sixth year of life, the main structures of the life-style they defend and the world view of each individual, which complements the life-style by rationalizing the life style, are virtually complete. Key life-style decisions are made before the individual is conscious of their implications. We must accept as a fact of the human condition that the very young child lacks sufficient information or life experience always to make life style choices appropriately. Complex personality structures emerge before the child has either an internal emotional or explicit verbal vocabulary to express or analyze their significance.

Rarely are those early life style decisions frankly evaluated for they are themselves the generators of personal values and therefore invisible because of their bias. That is the blind side of individuality, the side which the therapist must help the client confront. Indeed, we would all be perpetually consigned to an emotional solipsism, stemming from the blind spots in our own values- the confining world of the neurotic- but for the existence of social interest, our common fellow feeling. One of Adler's most important discoveries is that it is not divergence from the generally accepted outlook or mere eccentricity which is to be regarded warily in others, but rather the absence of social interest as manifested in the pursuit of the fictional goal. A common error in goal selection occurs when the individual seeks power over others as a substitute for mastery over the challenges of life. Unlike Freud and Jung, Adler actively sought social reform. He never equated the social interest with the status quo. Adler achieved a radical tolerance for positive innovation, wherever manifested, which few observers have ever approached. His

appreciation for the vital importance of social interest and his strong democratic beliefs provided Adler the notable ability to see key differences in motivation clearly:

The life plan and its fictional goal are the outcomes of the child's assessment of his or her experiences. This assessment is bound to be often inaccurate because, although children are excellent observers and have extraordinarily sharp perception, they lack the maturity and experience necessary to evaluate their observations adequately. Children's perceptiveness is perhaps due in part to their lacking a set style of life. Without such set style, one is open to all possible perceptions instead of having one's perceptivity selectively biased by a style of life that prevents almost completely the experience of "pure" perception. Guided by the fictional goal, children do the best they can to find for themselves a style of life that gives them an immediate feeling of belonging and promises a greater sense of belonging for the future. The style of life they seek is also one that gives them a sense of superiority as they define it for themselves. Once set, the style of life tends to become self-perpetuating.¹³

As Bettelheim explains, one of the reasons children prefer fairy tales to fables is that the fairy tale process conforms to the child's own experience of value formation. Morality and concern for others emerge from a conscious framework of consequence not a reflexive reinforcement of rules. The fairy tale more closely demonstrates such a meaningful framework, more accessible to the child than the abstract or admonitory depictions of the cautionary tale. In its appeal to the child's imagination, the familiar fairy tale can play a crucial role in supplementing with a mixture of jaunty acceptance, emphasis on loyalty, and comforting encouragement from unexpected quarters the confusing, often frightening experience the child has of life without the shield of a developed life style. As parents sense, timidity stifles the development of an adequate life style, yet exposure to the real dangers of the

¹³ Don C. Dinkmeyer, W. L. Pew, and Don C. Dinkmeyer Jr., Adlerian Counseling and Psychotherapy (Monterey: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1979) 29.

world could also lead to dire consequences, physical and psychic. Individual Psychology underscores an important role for the fairy tale : providing dramatic examples of varying kinds of challenges in a setting altered by convention from what passes as daily experience so that even the most daunting situations neither discourage nor threaten the child. In the next chapter we will review some examples drawn from the literature.

In sharing the agonizing life and death decisions of the fairy tale hero the child learns to empathize, to recognize the importance of values in real situations and to share in the despair or elation evoked by the consequences. This, and the experience of hearing tales which are genuinely intriguing, stimulates social interest much more effectively than any presentation of dry, comfortless principles with little personal meaning. For, as Adler would say, individual values are social values. Public rhetoric appears to objectify mere belief, but much of what passes for fact is only widely shared conjectural opinion. Collective fictions become ideologies which are probably as necessary for communal life as the fictional goal is for the individual lifestyle. Communities are founded on common fictional bases of assumptions. Only the pathological personality dismisses (because of their imperfections) the institutions which carry the standard of social interest.

Scientific support for Individual Psychology has been welcomed but never relied upon. Adler's observations led him to believe psychological processes and products must be understood subjectively. Therefore only empathy ensures that the therapist has any impact. Adler knew that empathy would be virtually impossible to measure but would not compromise in stating the importance of intangibles in therapy simply to gain scientific support. In the clinical setting, diagnosis begins with the therapist 'putting himself in the shoes' of the patient. This perspective leads Adlerians to a more humble,

collaborative approach than Freudians characteristically adopt. In the academic forum, Individual Psychologists more freely admit indebtedness to other sources than do Psychoanalysts. This attitude leads Adlerians to reject the filters and jargon of a rigid orthodoxy. Consequently, when Adler praises the literary classics for psychological insight, it sounds less patronizing or self-serving than would the same words from other theorists. In particular, Adler often remarked on his admiration for the intuitive psychology of Shakespeare and of the unencumbered insight found in fairy tales:

Important authors such as Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Schiller, Goethe, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as well as many literary stars of the second magnitude, have in their novels and plays presented a thousand depictions of human nature, and scientific analysis will hardly ever be able to exhaust their wealth of reality. The inner truthfulness of the figures born of the writer's imagination or his dreams derives from his lively concern with them, and this truthfulness gives the reader the sensation that he is dealing with real persons and not imagined ones. The charm of the aesthetically attractive and convincing presentation is an additional reason why we are spellbound by and feel the greatest admiration for the immortal works of literature. Depth psychology does not try to *dissect* these creations of the human intellect if it brings their validity to light by comparing them with its own theories; its only intention is to convey a deeper understanding and an appreciation refined by insight.¹⁴

Adlerian aesthetics - a comparison with Jung's approach

I saw a chapel all of gold
That none did dare to enter in,
And many weeping stood without,
Weeping, mourning, worshipping.¹⁵

Adler's expressed appreciation of literature, with which the above section closes, is a good beginning for a study of the aesthetics of Individual

¹⁴ Josef Rattner, Alfred Adler (New York : Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1983) 191.

¹⁵ Northrop Frye ed. Selected Poetry and Prose of Blake, (New York : Modern Library, 1953) 53.

Psychology. This reassurance is especially important since many of our hypotheses about Adlerian aesthetics will need to be derived or developed. To this point, our discussion of Adlerian theory has mainly revolved around comparisons with Freud's and not Jung's thought. The reasons for this are relatively straightforward. Adler was associated with Jung only as a fellow member of Freud's circle. Adler broke with Freud about a year before Jung's departure when his own ideas were already fairly well formed. Adler and Jung concurred that sex was too predominant a force in Psychoanalysis but diverged markedly in their conceptions about the unconscious. Adler shared with Jung the desire to grow beyond the constricting orthodoxy of Freud's Viennese Society. However, Individual Psychology owes more to the probing interrogation of Freud's method than to the oblique researches of Jung's syncretic approach to scholarship.

Then why has a chapter subheading which compares Adlerian to Jungian ideas been inserted in this paper?

Freud's reductionism ultimately dismisses serious treatment of aesthetics or poetics. Psychoanalysis has many interesting things to say about the motivation of authors and characters in literary works. Freud's own erudition led him to draw upon many insights and observations from all the arts. But, Psychoanalysis relentlessly emphasizes the poet is a daydreamer and that his products are but fantasy, byproducts of maladjustment. Bettelheim is as sympathetic a biographer as Freud could want. He notes that Freud was an amateur archeologist and that he transferred many of the strategies of this discipline to his reading of the human mind.¹⁶ Art can be transmogrified into artifact and interpreted as a clue to the puzzle of thought. This is an

¹⁶ Bettelheim, Freud 42.

interesting as well as a somewhat sympathetic notion. It would help explain the flirtation of many writers with 'analysis' as well as their subsequent disillusion.

Psychoanalysis is a methodical, sceptical process, unflattering in its depictions, partial in its conclusions, often narrow in its focus and largely backward looking. Artists need such a perspective periodically to assess their directions. But by their nature, they must eventually break free of this mode and return to creative production with a renewed rather than a diminished sense of purpose. René Wellek and Austin Warren summarize the general dissatisfaction many writers come to share with the reductionist approach of Psychoanalysis:

Most writers have drawn back from subscription to orthodox Freudianism or from completing what some have begun - their psychoanalytic treatment. Most of them have not wanted to be 'cured' or 'adjusted', either thinking they would cease to write if they were adjusted or that the adjustment proposed was to a normality or a social environment which they rejected as philistine or bourgeois. Thus Auden has asserted that artists should be as neurotic as they can endure; and many have agreed with such revisionist Freudians as Horney, Fromm and Kardiner, that Freud's conceptions of neurosis and normality, drawn from turn-of-the-century Vienna, need to be corrected by Marx and the anthropologists. ¹⁷

Of the three major proponents of early depth psychology, only Jung developed a conceptual framework sufficiently elaborate, timely and provocative enough to attract the sustained attention of the contemporary critical mainstream. Consequently, if there exist sufficient grounds for an Adlerian aesthetics, it is against a Jungian yardstick that they must be measured. To a point, Jung's model of the mind conforms with Freud's. He

¹⁷ René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York and London : Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1977) 82 - 83.

acknowledged the role of the ego and the super ego, even the personal unconscious. But, in an extraordinary departure from the Psychoanalytic model, Jung postulated a further psychic constituent he claimed is shared in common by the entire race, and perhaps dates from prehuman origins: the collective unconscious. The collective unconscious is distinguished by a use of symbols in a manner which typically, often ritualistically, conforms to age old cultural patterns, . Yet at the same time bringing the symbols to conscious light defies the satisfactory conscious explanation available when the material emerges from the personal unconscious. The symbols of the collective unconscious differ from the images of the personal unconscious which are deliberately repressed.

These collective images which Jung called archetypes can not be traced to events in the individual's past but do find counterparts in historical and prehistorical material. Archetypes appear in dreams, free association, creative output and unexpected patterns of interpretation or behaviour which have no traceable counterpart in the personal history of the individual. Any Jungian aesthetics would have to be based upon the Swiss psychiatrist's central idea of the archetype as the archaic, residual imagery of the collective unconscious because of its importance in his theories. Jung's theory of the archetype has rung a responsive chord among many artists and critics. The concept of an internal well-spring of universal import, a kind of personal oracle embedded in the recesses of the brain restores to the creative spirit a dignity which Freud seemed prepared to take away by making artistic production a peripheral, incidental function.

Like the personal Freudian unconscious the collective unconscious can offer no direct evidence of its existence. This is a problem distinct from but closely related to the problem of reification of the personal unconscious. That

is, there is always an issue whether abstractions such as the parts of the mind can be considered to exist in the same sense that solid articles enjoy reality. This argument can be turned around on itself, of course, by contesting that all conceptual constructs are arbitrary regardless of sensory basis. Therefore we are inclined to say something exists if it is truly useful to say so. Jung suggested that the collective unconscious was an inherited capability with no concrete existence as such. With so tenuous an empirical base in evidence it must have proved indispensable to his theory. Utility of the collective unconscious is the issue we can explore. Whether or not it offers anything of value to the critic is also of indirect but considerable importance to this paper.

Jung like Freud and Adler was a psychologist not a literary critic. He scoured the classics and less luminary works for evidence of archetypal function but not for literary patterns. Except that his explorations were more far-ranging and sensitive to the material itself, Jung like Freud was an archaeologist of the mind looking for symbols first and connections second. If problems appear in the development of a Jungian aesthetics, we should remember that for Jung, any function of the archetype within the work of art would always be less important than its discovery. Although the archetype can potentially raise the status of the artist to the level of shaman or seer, use of numinous symbols presents certain problems for any literature including the humble folk tale.

Jung made it clear that the significance of an archetypal symbol could not be clear by definition. Its power exists in proportion to an element of inscrutability. Once a symbol is completely interpreted, it is reduced to mere metaphor and loses its magical charge. An author might like to believe certain imagery still contains more creative potential than an archetypal disclosure suggests, but his treatment will attract less interest if his use of

imagery is either too personal or his images have lost their numinous or archetypal quality. So archetypes present a difficult dilemma to the craft of writing. Does the poet actually say more by using inherently ambiguous even if more universally exciting material?

Contents of an archetypal character are manifestations of processes in the collective unconscious. Hence they do not refer to anything that is or has been conscious, but to something essentially unconscious. In the last analysis, therefore, *it is impossible to say what they refer to.*¹⁸

Even if the problem of meaning is overcome, archetypes present still more difficulties for the artist. The risk that they may dominate or distort the works of art in which they figure is real. And if the archetype is only dimly understood the risk is compounded. For the reader or audience this interpretation implies a danger that inclusion of powerful archetypes cunningly used may be used to manipulate. Propaganda, crass commercialism and plain shoddy work might easily find shelter beneath the cloak of a larger than life archetype.

Speaking as a therapist however, Jung finds archetypes have healing and growth promoting power in the life of the person through the process he calls individuation. Presumably the larger communal purpose is also served:

In the psychic economy of the individual within whom such a transcending symbol emerges, his personal process of individuation can be said to progress; in the cultural economy of the group to which he belongs, the publicly objectified effects of that personal progressive development may be said to function in such ways as both 'lead men to premonition while defending them against experience.' What enables one person to become more properly himself, likewise, enables his

¹⁸ C. G. Jung, Essays on a Science of Mythology 104.

group to further meaningful possibilities within its cultural life.¹⁹

It appears the integrating function of the archetypal symbol serves the social interest as well as the individual. Jung criticized Freud and Adler both for concentrating on the pathological personality and missing the growth process of the healthy psyche. His preference was to explore normal development towards individuation. He believed the role of symbols in normal life is to lift the person above himself and the repressed material of a personal unconscious to greater understanding through contact with the collective unconscious.

The discovery of the archetype or rather of the position of the archetype in our lives is important. Furthermore, the phenomenon of the archetype could never have emerged as naturally from Adler's work as it does from Jung's Analytic Psychology. However, archetypal formulations are not inconsistent or contradictory to the theoretical base of Individual Psychology. Jung, as observed above was unsure himself of the nature of the archetype. By situating archetypes in the collective unconscious, he was stating more about the extent of their importance than their ontology or nature of being. At first glance, little in Adler appears to have any counterpart in Jung's approach to universal symbols. Adler objected to the abuse of the term unconscious for reasons already discussed and because it furnished the client with a built-in excuse to deny or reduce responsibility for unacceptable behaviour. ("My unconscious made me do it.") If Adler found no need for a personal unconscious, how much less likely would he be inclined to credit a collective unconscious? However, on closer examination and considering the

¹⁹ Morris Philipson, Outline of a Jungian Aesthetics (Evanston : Northwestern University Press, 1963) 65.

flexible way in which archetypes can be considered, is it not also feasible to read the symbolism of the archetype with its transpersonal significance as the metalanguage of social interest?

Let us suppose the archetype is the symbolic counterpart of the common universal of social interest, which Adler referred to as mystically as Jung described his collective unconscious. Immediately weaknesses in the aesthetics of both Analytic and Individual Psychology are removed. Jungian speculations on the purpose of archetypal symbols are resolved when they are construed as the means to share the purpose of community and thereby bind the past to the future. This lofty function also explains the importance of archetypal action in the growth or individuation of the self, as it allows universal symbols to be seen as a means to place the person in the context of the total human community and so acquire a full sense of meaning. For Individual Psychology, the enrichment of the archetype fleshes out the action of social interest by making it more than an inference or an article of faith.

Communally shared symbols intended to bring people together help to explain the psychology of religion and the logic of theology without forcing the issue of specific belief. For, if the collective unconscious is actually the collective interest, aesthetics must therefore exist to regain some of the paradise lost when innocence is overcome and the defensive life style is formed. Armed with this kind of awareness of what the archetype exists to suggest, we can dare to enter the empty golden chapel of Blake's poem. With some confidence in the overall design of the symbolic relationships we can face the imagery of a sanctuary which is broken in upon by the phallic snake, archetypal symbol of knowledge (and biblically of course, also of evil). We will read in this design the restoring of the original order or undoing of the

original fall by completion of a cycle in the paradoxical understanding and simultaneous desecration of the sacrament.

The affinity of the literary to Individual Psychology

This range of interpretive variation will not seem striking to a literary scholar. If such variances were not expressible the arts would become sterile and rigid. Freud's scholarship also encompassed the mythical and his genius evokes some astounding insights from the work of the artist and the origins of our culture. But there is a one-sidedness to Freud's interpretations - he tolerated a single orthodox reading of the Oedipus myth, for example - which the critic would question critically. In Freud's system the oedipal theme is a building block of key importance. Therefore Freud found it essential to interpret the story with nearly ritual rigidity. This tone in Freud's criticism would resurface whenever he or his disciples offered a commentary:

Now in two places in the figure of Moses there are certain details which have hitherto not only escaped notice - but, in fact have not been properly described. These are the attitude of his right hand and the position of the two Tables of Law. We may say that this hand forms a very singular, unnatural link, and one which calls for explanation, between the tables and the wrathful hero's beard.²⁰

Freud's tone is reminiscent of Sherlock Holmes. It carries the matter of fact assertiveness of a working detective whose pressing purpose in pursuit of the culprit places him beyond question. This quality adds an air of fascination to Freud's prose, but should not allow his judgements to pass without scrutiny. Psychoanalysis stems from a causal universe and it is easy to accept its cryptic, sometimes facile summaries of ambiguous myth or disorganized ramblings since that is the nature of its process. Yet, throughout the long centuries of

²⁰ Sigmund Freud, On Creativity and the Unconscious (New York : Harper and Row, 1958) 25.

interpretation, our interest in mythology and the human condition has been spurred and tempered by the realization these mercurial essences could hardly be comprehended by a single perspective nor reduced to simple evidence of behavioural links. Sleuthing among the classics for clues may be useful to psychology and therefore in a roundabout way to criticism. However, it is a method which sidesteps the moment of the work of art itself. In effect, the psychoanalytic approach which can so easily be diverted into such critical tangents as Hamlet's childhood, is essentially unliterary despite the psychological interest of such speculations.

On the other hand, Psychoanalysis can enrich the reading of any story as can any method which provides another way to regard the interaction of the characters. An example of the skilful use of Psychoanalysis to shed light on the feelings of an adolescent boy demonstrates the power and decided limits of Freudian theory as an aid to criticism:

On one level Jerry Tilford's behavior is wounding because it punctures an attempt to idealize him, to deny his sexuality and the parents'. On still another level it is wounding because it has the character of a sexual rejection and betrayal. To some extent the boy's feelings are those of an outraged lover. Logically the two sets of reactions are incompatible with one another, but here as is frequently the case, fiction is speaking to a part of the psyche not concerned with logic, a part which can simultaneously accommodate divergent and even contradictory feelings.²¹

Internal conflict does not require the full Freudian apparatus of the unconscious or suppression of oedipal impulse for explanation. However, the sense of deepset disturbance, unresolved business about sexuality and adulthood and the abandonment of innocence are critical to an appreciation of

²¹ Simon O. Lesser "The Image of the Father", Five Approaches of Literary Criticism, ed. Wilbur Scott (New York : Collier Books, 1962) 119.

the story Simon Lesser considers in this passage. The psychoanalytic treatment ensures we take the issues seriously. If Lesser digresses into standard discussions of latency, displacement and repression, they have a place in this context. This is the sense in which Psychoanalysis aids literary criticism. Certainly the well-rounded critic should know his Freud.

Northrop Frye has helped to clarify the psychological expectations of the folk tale by using more typically literary tools - by documenting the recurring imagery, patterns and typology of the familiar genre. As a consequence of his insights, the student recognizes how the well-crafted fairy tale answers more or less universal expectations consistently, but with the individual counterpoint of the serendipitous or the unexpected. This predictable deviation keeps the listener attuned and gives each tale personality. The oral tradition requires the presence of the teller who adds to each telling his own distinctive embellishments which continue to expand upon the familiar form.

One of the four major essays in Frye's Anatomy of Criticism is entitled "Archetypal Criticism: Theory of Myths". This essay approaches the mood or tone in which mythic material is approached as distinct from its consistent content. Using a framework of archetypal imagery, Frye outlines a scheme in which each of the seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter embodies a different way the everlasting body of myth may be viewed.

The fairy tale is romance in this scheme which belongs to the mood of summer. Archetypal summer is naturally poised between spring and autumn. Spring according to Frye, embodies the mythos of comedy, as autumn expresses tragedy. Romance representing summer is characterized by movement between these dramatically distinctive forms, between heaven and earth, idyllic past and earthy present, the high and lowly of station and between

established patrician hierarchy and the consummation of fraternity. In romance, character distinctions are stark, often crudely drawn, transformations, quests and initiations abound. Yet curiously, it seems, the movement of romance is a reversal of the natural. The opening mood of the romantic tale is tragic or autumnal but the conclusion is full of happiness, a new beginning, springtime all over again. This too is a hallmark of the form, recurrence and recreation, wiser for experience. Should this counter clockwise reversal surprise us? Is there some vital message in the undoing and remaking of the world? ²²

The romance is nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfilment dream, and for that reason it has socially a curiously paradoxical role. In every age the ruling social or intellectual class tends to project its ideals in some form of romance, where the virtuous heroes and beautiful heroines represent the ideals and the villains the threats to their ascendancy. This is the general character of chivalric romance in the Middle Ages, aristocratic romance in the Renaissance, bourgeois romance since the eighteenth century, and revolutionary romance in contemporary Russia. Yet there is a genuinely proletarian element in romance too which is never satisfied with its various incarnations, and in fact the incarnations themselves indicate that no matter how great a change may take place in society, romance will turn up again, as hungry as ever looking for new hopes and desires to feed on. The perennially childlike quality of romance is marked by its extraordinarily persistent nostalgia, its search for some sort of imaginative golden age in time or space.²³

The fairy tale as a prototypically uncomplicated romance carries the quest for a new and relatively care free life through realms of tribulation and adventure towards a social reconciliation which is simultaneously conservative and revolutionary in its insistence. In Frye's scheme the

²² Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1976) 131 - 239.

²³ Frye, Anatomy 186.

romantic archetype, of which the fairy tales is a subset, expresses a social impulse and a social ideal - the same ground on which the forces striving for personal superiority or social interest contend. Frye presents a credible vision of the archetype as an external social value rather than as a mysterious innate engram or racial tendency as Jung suggests. Furthermore Frye's archetypes are visibly transformed and reconstructed as society articulates new ideals or discovers new experiences of value to it. This is the significance of time reversal in the romance, of returning to comedic spring from romantic summer. And within the symbolic patterns of the recurring body of tales which is our common heritage, we find the familiar responses of personal lifestyle orienting the individual within the collective environment.

This is actually putting words in Frye's mouth. His criticism is panoramic, little concerned with individual motivation except as it exemplifies larger concentric motions. However, these two ideas: the cultural pattern and the personal life style, have been juxtaposed to illustrate the feasibility of an Adlerian aesthetics. The individual can still follow his unique law of motion within a larger cultural framework. Indeed, the larger pattern is the more regular for the individual being unaware of his place in it. Focus upon the fictional goal makes one unconscious of collective reality. But in Adlerian thought, development of social interest implies that collective reality need not remain totally unconscious. The metalanguage of archetypes is actually the cultural wisdom about human and natural relationships. It is a language which can be deliberately learned and taught. The arts and literature are a crucial part of that learning. Romance and fairy tales in particular especially teach that the world of dreaming and imagination is of intrinsic value. As the next chapter attempts to show by examining specific fairy tales, fantasy has

social meaning and is not just a release of repressed personal desire nor the sporadic recurrence of archaic survivals from an imperfectly evolved brain.

CHAPTER 4

A COMPARISON BETWEEN FREUDIAN AND ADLERIAN READINGS OF SELECTED TALES

This chapter offers an alternative to a Freudian reading of selected familiar fairy tales in providing examples which illustrate Adlerian depth psychology. As we have seen, Adlerians promote a more optimistic, less deterministic view of mankind than Freudians. This perspective is inextricably connected with their unified definition of self and the notion of an integrated perceptual continuum from conscious awareness to unconscious behaviour which is a cornerstone of Individual Psychology. Because the client, or reader is expected to take an active role in effective therapeutic or instructional processes, emphasis in Individual Psychology is upon conscious choice rather than passive development. Some of the critical advantages and drawbacks inherent in an Adlerian approach, both philosophical and critical, are discussed in the next, chapter.

The fairy tales discussed below feature different aspects of insight and appeal to different modes of action. Mosak describes six goals of therapy corresponding to the Adlerian educational or reeducational model of therapy which, because they are also didactic principles, can be applied readily to fairy tales. The six goals are:

1. The fostering of social interest.
2. The decrease of inferiority feelings and the overcoming of discouragement.

3. Changes in the person's life-style, i.e., his perceptions and goals (in this connection, since all apperception involves bias, the therapeutic goal, as has been mentioned, involves transforming big errors into little ones [as with automobiles, some persons need a "tune-up"; others require a "major overhaul"]).
4. Changing faulty motivation that underlies even acceptable behavior or changing values.
5. Encouraging the individual to recognize his equality among his fellowmen (Dreikurs, 1971).
6. Helping him to become a contributive human being.¹

Each of the tales discussed in this chapter is examined as it furthers all of the above six goals but especially as it exemplifies one goal in particular. These tales have been thoroughly explicated by Bettelheim to demonstrate Freudian theory in The Uses of Enchantment. The examination proceeds by comparison, with Bettelheim's observations beginning the detailed discussions of each of the ten fairy tales.

Hansel and Gretel

As Bettelheim explains within the Freudian framework, "Hansel and Gretel" is a story which addresses the unadmitted guilt and fear which all children experience profoundly at various stages in their lives - that their very existence creates certain tensions and therefore poses a threat to the survival of the family as a whole. In The Uses of Enchantment Bettelheim describes how the language of food and feeding provides the framework for this expression of anxiety within the story. The parents believe they are too poor to feed their children; when they are taken into the forest to be abandoned, Hansel leaves a trail of bread crumbs which is eaten by the birds;

¹ Corsini, Raymond J., "Psychoanalysis," Current Psychotherapies (Itasca : F. E. Peacock) 64.

witch's apparent kindness is a trap to feed Hansel and Gretel a full and tasty meal as a form of bait; later she fattens Hansel up in hopes of devouring him and forces Gretel to help with the cooking; the witch's fate is to be baked in her own oven.²

Oral symbolism is predominant in the story as are the roles of birds who prevent the children from returning home by eating the bread crumb trail, guiding them through the forest and eventually helping them return home loaded with booty after their adventure. Like "The Three Little Pigs", "Hansel and Gretel" is regarded by Freudians as a tale intended to take children past the hurdles of the oral phase of development. Bettelheim is sensitive to the changes both internal and external which the children undergo during their adventure. They learn independence, self-reliance and the need to put immediate gratification on the back burner, so to speak, when personal safety is at stake. He also notes that the siblings learn to rely on each other.

These stories direct the child toward transcending an immature dependence on parental support in reaching a higher stage of development. The transition also involves learning to value the support of age mates. Cooperating with them in meeting life's tasks will eventually have to replace the child's single-minded reliance on his parents only. The child of school age often cannot yet believe that he ever will be able to meet the world without his parents; that doubt generates the desire to hold onto parental support past necessity. The child must learn to trust that someday the dangers

² Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and importance of Fairy Tales (New York: Vintage Books, 1977) 159 - 162.

of the world will be mastered, even in the exaggerated form in which current fears depict them, and that the experience will be enriching.³

In an Adlerian analysis these last points would be the central issues. "Hansel and Gretel" is a tale where the question of competitive versus cooperative values is dramatized. Because cooperative values prove most successful beginning with the children and then extending to the entire family, the world which begins as a menacing and forbidding place yields some of its treasure and transforms itself into a place of opportunity. Bettelheim states poverty and deprivation make human beings less sensitive to the sufferings of others as an explanation of the parents' fateful decision concerning Hansel and Gretel. Individual Psychology would suggest an alternative outlook. The parents' approach to social values in the fairy tale colours the way they regard their problems. They cannot look past their 'life boat' mentality - they see themselves in competition with their children for basic necessities. Regardless of their actual material situation many families do not view the division of resources or benefits in the same stark light. These households put the common good and the need to cooperate in solving common problems first.

At first the children are afraid and discouraged. But necessity teaches them that although their parents are trying honestly to survive, their social interest does not extend to their children. The witch, on the other hand, takes an interest in the children and appears to care for them. But her interest is quite literally, predatory. The children, despite these hard lessons, learn to help each other. So successful are their efforts, they are able to return to the home from which they were ejected, changing forever the fortunes of their

³ Bettelheim, Uses 166.

family.

Adlerians, as we have seen earlier, regard fantasy as a projective tool to visualize the achievement of worthwhile goals rather than merely as a reactive consolation for gratifications or illusions which must be forsaken. A portion of imaginative life is always directed towards sentimental remembrance of things past and doubtless any picture of the future must be drawn from memory. But, according to Individual Psychology, the nature of man is forward looking. We proceed by creating fantasies or fictions to function as working hypotheses. Children whose life experience has taught them little of the details of life but who comprehend many of its sound generalities can find nourishment for their fictions in fairy tales.

In fairy stories we observe birds and animals talking; human beings transformed into non-human subjects; witches; magic, both good and malevolent; wishes coming true, as if these existed in reality etc. The behavior has movement and purpose. The issue raised is how are these to be explained from the perspective of Individual Psychology? They are explained by the creation of fictions. They have no basis in reality:

Adler defined fictions as mental structures. The essential element in a fiction is not its conscious deviation from reality but the useful nature of the deviation. In enumerating the types of fiction, he included the aesthetic fictions. They included not only all similes, metaphors and comparisons, but also the ideational forms that deal ever more freely with reality. Aesthetic fictions serve the purpose of awakening within us certain uplifting feelings. They are a means for attaining higher ends.⁴

Forced to confront the seriousness of their situation in the forest and in the witch's cottage the children learn to overcome their feelings of

⁴ Harry P. Elam, "An Adlerian Approach to the Analysis of Children's Fairy Tales," diss., The Alfred Adler Institute, Chicago, 1975, 3.

inferiority and discouragement as their plans succeed. As their clever actions bear fruit, their goals reflect their confidence. No longer content to survive, they now expect to prosper. In altering their goal from surviving to thriving the life-style of the children must also change. They can now regard themselves as equal rather than expendable members of their family clearly contributive to its welfare in changing its fortunes and prospects. Even very small children can see and identify with the changes brought about when Hansel and Gretel show courage and take action. Whatever the mistakes they do make, a passive approach would clearly have yielded a disastrous outcome.

Beauty and the Beast

Bettleheim concludes his study of fairy tales with an analysis of what he calls the Animal- Groom Cycle of tales. In these stories a prince, spellbound in an animal body, is typically transformed into his true state by the love of a beautiful maiden. Bettleheim regards this series and "Beauty and the Beast" in particular as a fitting conclusion to his interpretation because it is a tale which successfully completes the transition from oedipal to mature sexual love. In this story Beauty, the youngest of three sisters and three brothers, is also the most beautiful and attracts the jealousy of her older sisters. When the family loses its fortune, the vain and selfish sisters react badly but Beauty's character shines through. The father sets forth on a trip to try to regain some of his fortune. Before he leaves he asks each of the three daughters what they would wish him to bring home for them. The older daughters ask for riches and fine clothes but Beauty only for a rose. Ironically, when the father becomes lost in the woods, discovers an empty castle and avails himself of its hospitality, it is not until he picks roses for Beauty from the palace garden that the owner, a fearsome Beast, appears to challenge the trespasser. After hearing his explanation, the beast threatens immediate death as a penalty but

offers an alternative. If the father brings back one of his daughters in three months to die in his stead, he will release him from his summary sentence. The father has no intention of substituting a daughter but is grateful to gain three last months with his family. Furthermore the Beast gives the father a chest of gold to take with him.

Bettleheim takes the view that the roses symbolize the attachment between Beauty and her father. Although he does not mention it, the fact that these particular roses are forbidden adds credence to Bettlheim's interpretation as evidence of a symbolic allusion to the incest taboo. Beauty's sisters, we learn early in the story, go out to parties and enjoy male company while she prefers to remain at home. So when Beauty volunteers to go to the Beast in place of her father, we can be sure it is out of filial devotion. Reluctantly the father takes Beauty to the palace in the woods at her insistence. When the Beast asks if she has come willingly, she concurs without hesitation. The fate in store for Beauty is fortunately very different from that promised. The Beast answers her every need and desire in return for evening visits when he talks with her. Soon she finds this life of indulgence boring and lonely and the Beast's visits become the highlight of her day. When she learns her father needs her, it awakens her concern and she begs the Beast permission to visit him. The Beast agrees on condition that she return within a week. Beauty visits with her family which restores her overjoyed father to full health. She is tricked by her sisters to overstay the week; they secretly hope an irate Beast will come storming into their home to punish Beauty. Suddenly Beauty realizes that the Beast really needs her and she runs to his side to find him pining away. On promising to stay with him and marry him, the Beast is transformed back into the prince he really is as the spell is broken.

Bettleheim regards the metamorphosis of the prince as an example of folk wisdom anticipating Freudian insight:

This foreshadows by centuries the Freudian view that sex must be experienced by the child as disgusting as long as his sexual longings are attached to his parent, because only through such a negative attitude toward sex can the incest taboo, and with it the stability of the human family, remain secure. But once detached from the parent and directed to a partner of more suitable age, in normal development, sexual longings no longer seem beastly - to the contrary, they are experienced as beautiful. ⁵

Bettleheim's interpretation is not so different from an Adlerian reading in its most important conclusions although it does differ in orientation and emphasis. This story touches on many elements which are important to Individual Psychology. Like Hansel and Gretel, Beauty is called upon to demonstrate her social interest in her affection for her father and later for the Beast. The jealousy of her sisters contrasts between their striving for personal power rather than mastery and the healthy social interest which Beauty demonstrates. The elder sisters' striving is evident from their vanity and especially in the marked deterioration in their behaviour as their fortunes decline. When things go well, cooperative values are not tested. Only adversity clearly demarcates those seeking a goal of superiority from those pursuing the common welfare. Beauty's courage and action orientation give her a better grasp of the reality of her family's situation. When her father embarks on his journey, she is the only daughter to ask a gift of him which he can realistically be expected to bring home. Beauty's love for her father is truly selfless as unequivocally demonstrated by her unselfish action of personal sacrifice. She is both active and courageous in her response to life.

⁵ Bettleheim, Uses 308.

The leisurely existence Beauty experiences in the Beast's palace does not appeal to her engaging, active approach to life and she soon tires of it. She forms her friendship with the Beast out of common human feeling, not out of pity and obviously not because of sexual attraction. For Beauty also shows balance in her approach to life's tasks. She works hard at whatever she undertakes and responds with friendship to people she comes to know and with appropriate loyalty to family. When the time is right, she is ready to love and gives her commitment spontaneously but intelligently. Although it is of crucial symbolic significance, the transformation of the Beast is almost an anticlimax for it is the strong friendship with Beauty which effects the real transformation. Beauty represents qualities and ideals which encourage children by example within the framework of an entertaining plot.

Beauty's example illustrates the six goals of therapeutic education as do many other tales. She shows social interest in her relations with her father and the Beast as we have noted. Her experience in the Beast's palace where she must deal with the discouraging sense of futility and of consignment to an inferior fate is a testimony to her courage. Beauty matures through the story, transferring her affections and primary loyalty from her father to the Beast as their friendship deepens and love becomes a possibility. Symbolically, the shift in goals leads to a refined life-style and perceptions represented by the Beast's release from his spell. The Beast matures in his motives seeking at first only company to ease the loneliness and pain of rejection his appearance engenders. However, as he learns to love Beauty for herself and not simply as the answer to his own needs, he becomes an appropriate partner escaping the evil enchantment. In accepting the task of love and marriage both Beauty and the Beast see themselves as full members of the human community entitled to all its benefits and fully capable of making their contributions.

The Three Little Pigs

According to Bettelheim, "The Three Little Pigs", represents the oral phase of personality growth within the Freudian scheme. The entire tale is full of the imagery of consumption, of devouring, of food itself, and of associated creature comforts. We can also find characteristic oral braggadocio as expressed by the first two pigs in overrating the security of their homes. The wolf's threats of huffing and puffing are also boastful but carry more substance. In an impressive display of aggressive orality he threatens to blow down the homes of the pigs and to devour them. The wolf epitomizes the frightening power of the oral phase as well as its worst irrational demands. For Bettelheim as an orthodox Freudian therefore the tale dramatizes the turning point every child faces in learning to base his actions on the reality principle instead of the more comforting pleasure principle:

"The Three Little Pigs" teaches the nursery-age child in a most enjoyable and dramatic form that we must not be lazy and take things easy, for if we do, we may perish. Intelligent planning and foresight combined with hard labor will make us victorious over even our most ferocious enemy - the wolf! ⁶

As Bettelheim describes the wolf, he symbolizes the ravaging power of the id. The child, at some level, recognizes the externalized evil of the wolf as the outward embodiment of a fearsome badness within. The pigs, on the other hand, each in turn represent more developed phases of the increasingly ego-strengthened self. The pig with the straw house is least able to forego pleasure to protect himself. At the other extreme, the pig who selects the appropriately sturdy bricks to make his home is most in tune with the reality principle. So, although these disturbing internal processes remain unconscious as such to the child, the developmental counterpart to the events dramatized in the story

⁶ Bettelheim, Uses 41

is the truly important script for Bettelheim. " Internally, the pigs' actions show progress from the id-dominated personality to the superego-influenced but essentially ego-controlled personality." ⁷

The mechanics of Bettelheim's analysis of "The Three Little Pigs" are fairly clear. There are abundant examples of a whole cluster of imagery associated with orality. He sees the very young child as captive of the oral phase. However, he theorizes that there comes a time when the child is ready to move to the next phase and to relinquish his less mature desires. The fairy tale provides a metaphorical framework which facilitates the transition by evoking both an old and a new desire: specifically, the desire for comfort and the desire for autonomy. In Bettelheim's Freudian approach, the fairy tale gives voice to these emotions struggling with each other within the child.

"The Three Little Pigs" presents a symmetrical model of a family. That is, there is a first born, a middle child and a last born in the family constellation. Adler held that birth order was a powerful influence in the individual's choice of life style. In the competitive atmosphere which family life tends to create, every birth order position offers opportunities to the child to feel inferior and discouraged. Moving from a position of perceived inferiority, the child attempts to adapt to family surroundings. If the child is the first born, then the next born, and subsequent siblings to a lesser extent, dethrone the unlucky eldest in terms of parental attention. This child now has choices which may include: acting on the threat to status by demanding attention, trying to gain control over the situation, perhaps getting even with the insensitive parents or withdrawing into despair. Those are diverse

⁷ Bettelheim, Uses 42.

behaviours but all represent discouragement to one degree or another. The only effective alternative of the first born is not to give in to discouraging influences but to adapt and get on with the tasks of life.

As Bettelheim observes, the hero of this tale is the first born. He is the most successful because he focuses on useful and realistic goals. We know little of the pigs' home life or the relationship among the brothers except that they have set out to seek their fortunes. The point, which is obvious and therefore not belaboured, is that the oldest pig has mastered the essential task of building a secure home which is an outward manifestation representing the life-style. The brick house symbolizes independence as well as industry and security. From this base the oldest pig forays against the wolf and eventually defeats him by his wits.

The second child surveys the family scene and tries to find a way of belonging in a situation already established. If the first child is pursuing useful goals and getting credit for it, the second child will seek other goals. These goals may be useful also, but will set the second child apart from the first. For example, the second child may become a concert violinist when the first is a star athlete. Unfortunately, often the first child has staked out or been assigned the territory most valued in the family. In this case the second child may be discouraged and may seek attention through pampering, that is by appearing needy, difficult or dependent. This appears to be what has happened to the middle pig. Measuring his importance by the amount of pampering he receives, he throws together a twig house and indulges his desire to praise himself excessively and pursue amusement.

"The youngest child has the tendency to either try to overtake all the others or to remain a baby, expecting help, service, and consideration."⁸ A survey of folk tale literature provides countless examples of youngest children succeeding in difficult tasks against the odds. However, as noted by Bettelheim, the youngest of the three pigs is not one of those. In Freudian terminology, the youngest pig like the second is unable to get beyond the pleasure principle. Adlerians might hypothesize that he has decided to retain a dependent stance towards life as a means to garner attention. It worked at home, why not in the wide world? Because, as every child who has watched a night time shadow creep up the wall of his room knows, there are wolves out there.

The impact of the story is greater because pigs are ridiculous. The child can learn from a barnyard caricature a lesson which would be either a horror story if realistically dramatized or a condescending insult if delivered as a lecture. Adlerians believe children do not usually misbehave out of ignorance about what is unacceptable, but because their own goals are inappropriate. Bettelheim astutely remarks that fairy tales are more effective than fables precisely because they do not lecture at children; they use wit or nonsense instead of hammering home a moral. Adlerians see fairy stories as entertaining examples of logical and natural consequences. Notwithstanding that the world of the fairy tale requires the reader or listener to adopt a modified logic, a subset of the natural world, a world of magic, the laws of consequences still apply. If the child can recognize himself in one of the silly pigs he may be motivated to change his behavior before a parallel fate

⁸ Don C. Dinkmeyer, W. L. Pew, and Don C. Dinkmeyer Jr., Adlerian Counseling and Psychotherapy (Monterey: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1979) 23.

overtakes him. The fairy tale offers an insight; it never insists on correction. The obvious, self-destructive consequence of persisting in the mistaken goal is the incentive to change direction.

The social interest illustrated in the "The Three Little Pigs" is manifest in the presence or absence of their commitment to the task of work. Children, like many adults, have a tendency to avoid the responsibility which goes with social interest. In this story the consequences of trying to get by are abundantly obvious. As weight loss clinics attest, self-indulgence is a common screen for discouragement and feelings of inferiority. If this tale shows what happens when these sentiments dominate, it also provides evidence of the value in overcoming them. Bettelheim has observed that the repetition in this tale suggests the evolving identity of a single individual. From an Adlerian perspective, the image demonstrates the evolution of life-style, the different results which can occur when faulty motives are corrected, that it takes serious effort to be able to regard oneself as equal in the world and that being able to contribute means more than going through the motions.

Snow White

Bettelheim's analysis of "Snow White" is fairly extensive as he uses it to work in many of the Freudian themes such as oedipal conflict, the transition to latency and the reawakening of sexuality during puberty. He observes that children share a common fantasy - that their *real* parents are exalted and that the family they belong to now is a temporary substitute. Bettelheim discusses the possible folkloric significance of the dwarves comparing it with a psychoanalytic symbolism; i.e. that the dwarves represent a preadolescent, asexual and subterranean world in which Snow White finds a temporary safe haven. Because the central movement of the story is impelled by Snow White's

maturation to womanhood, a psychosexual interpretation seems more satisfying and appropriate to this material than other tales.

However, the nub of the tale is the destructive impact of narcissism, love of self or vanity. The magic mirror is a great gift the wicked queen can turn only to evil and self-destruction ultimately, because her internal self image is not consistent with the truth of its pronouncements. In Individual Psychology the superiority complex, the desire to overachieve and assert dominance over others and distance oneself from perceived states of weakness, is acknowledged to be a continuity of the inferiority complex. Therefore although Bettelheim's analysis is fairly comprehensive, in many ways this story is better illuminated from an Adlerian perspective.

Adler identified three main tasks in life: friendship, love and work. Of these friendship is probably the key as it is the usual first source of social interest, essential for the successful completion of all three. Snow White is born into an environment which appears highly privileged from without. Yet in reality it is a precarious, threatened existence in which it is unlikely Snow White will long survive, let alone complete her life tasks. Furthermore, she is an exceptionally beautiful child, a princess susceptible to pampering which would fit her ill for life. Snow White is so loved by her father and hated by her stepmother that although we are shown little of the family atmosphere, we may surmise she was probably subjected to alternate expressions of pampering and neglect.

In Individual Psychology the perception of the child is always viewed as more determinant of what he makes of it than the reality of the family situation. Even an extraordinary home life like Snow White's can seem very familiar emotionally, awakening sympathetic responses among young readers. Adlerians recognize that children are keen observers but poor interpreters.

An example of this is referenced above as described by Bettelheim: many children believe they are undervalued in their homes and conclude this must be because their parents are actually inferior or indifferent stepparents. The jealousy and competitiveness of Snow White's home may not seem so exaggerated to the child reader. Like Snow White the child reader may feel simultaneously both special and neglected and at risk within the family. In many households where the parents are ill-prepared for children, the coming of a child is greeted with ambivalence. Family life in homes beset by poverty or a tradition of abuse is unfortunately often as bad as the worst perception. Like Snow White, many children will not learn courage or concern for others through their families.

In the substitute family of the dwarves' forest lair, Snow White is exposed to examples of the successful furtherance of two of life's three primary goals: work and friendship. Bettelheim observes the dwarves are pretty nearly all business, but in their loving solicitude for Snow White, they prove themselves exemplary friends. And Snow White responds. She shoulders her burden of cottage chores and becomes a true friend to the dwarves. Despite her provocative appearance and early exposure to the influence of vanity she learns social interest in the shelter of the woods. This is important because although as Bettelheim fully explains, the dwarves are locked into an almost timeless cycle, Snow White is rapidly maturing to womanhood. The ambiguous gift of her beauty brings the evil stepmother to entice Snow White with vain temptations which awaken her sexuality. She bites the poisoned apple but does not swallow it. This important detail suggests symbolically her learned resistance to self-importance, a capacity she has acquired during her sojourn with the dwarves.

The temptations the queen presents are necessary for Snow White's growth and in order that she will be able to take on the last of the three tasks of life. When Snow White falls into her deep slumber precipitated by the influence of the evil in her past, she is sustained by the guardian dwarves. Finally, the precocious beauty which has previously been such a hazard serves its purpose in the fullness of time. She bestirs the love and courage of another and so is able to fulfill herself in friendship, work and love. The nemesis of the wicked stepmother queen demonstrates the horrific effect of self aggrandizement in vanity as expressed in her jealousy. As Bettelheim comments:

In "Snow White" the vain jealous, and destructive queen is forced to put on red hot shoes, in which she must dance until she dies. Untrammelled sexual jealousy, which tries to ruin others, destroys itself- as symbolized not only by the fiery red shoes but by death from dancing in them. ⁹

The story of Snow White is the conquest of discouragement and feelings of inferiority. The jealousy of the wicked queen is a mask for her own sense of inferiority closely associated with her enormous vanity. Snow White must learn to overcome her stepmother's legacy of inferiority transmitted explicitly by abuse and more subtly by example. The queen therefore appeals to Snow White's vanity in the temptations she offers. But Snow White has learned social interest through her friendship with the dwarves and the contributions she has made to their lives in the forest. Readers sense that she is not fully ready to participate in the real world through the symbolism of her association with diminutive and unusual companions hidden away in the depths of the woods. Nevertheless, this is her training ground for a better

⁹ Bettelheim, Uses 214.

life-style and Snow White can only be transformed (represented by the transparent cocoon of the glass coffin) because of her caring relationship with the dwarves. The prince's attraction to Snow White demonstrates that she is ready to become a full contributing adult, can shed her feelings of inferiority and attraction to foolish vanities and can move beyond the community of the dwarfs.

Goldilocks and the Three Bears

In the Uses of Enchantment, Bettelheim writes that "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" lacks two important ingredients of true fairy tales - recovery and consolation. These ingredients are important to the Freudian perspective with its emphasis upon wish fulfilment, the unconscious and the renouncement of the pleasures of early childhood. Nevertheless he believes this relatively recent story deals with three issues important to a Freudian reading: oedipal problems, identity and sibling rivalry. The story appears to have begun as a cautionary tale but as it became more embellished with intriguing details, lost its reproachful cast. The language in this tale is particularly straightforward and the action is readily explained in non-psychoanalytic terms. Although there is important symbolism in the repeated use of the number three throughout the tale, Bettelheim's attempts to connect this with a psychosexual interpretation appear strained.

Because of the nature of family life, every child feels disoriented and like an intruder some of the time. A common metaphor in the search for identity, one which appears repeatedly in popular fairy tales, is to be lost in the woods. Similarly metaphoric, Goldilocks' exploration of the empty cottage is a reenactment of childhood curiosity, testing the boundaries of the known and of the forbidden. The story evokes feelings of intrigue spiced with mild apprehension consistent with the child's tentative explorations of his own

emerging self. Finding the self means testing one's preferences and comparing them with those of the rest of the family. In this tale testing is expressed figuratively as sampling the belongings, food and prerogatives of those occupying different roles within the family constellation. Naturally, within the Freudian context, Bettelheim sees Goldilocks performing these forbidden gestures against an oedipal backdrop.

An Adlerian analysis of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" would reflect a different emphasis and probably suggest a more positive and definitive resolution. Clearly, from the Adlerian viewpoint the roles of father and mother are being questioned in the tale, but it is from the generalized standpoint of gender identification and assumed (if stereotyped) social postures such as dominance or passivity. Any implied oedipal attraction seems at best, peripheral to other aspects of the tale. The symbol of Goldilocks lost in the forest seems indisputably connected with her search for identity. Consequently the bears' household is a symmetrical unit and a kind of mirror of Goldilocks' own family as Bettelheim also notes. But the bears' home is different. Bears live a plodding, comfortable, predictable kind of existence as this particular bear family demonstrates. However, Goldilocks is unable to discover a place for herself in this tableau. She finds Father Bear's chair too hard and Mother Bear's too soft but Baby Bear's, although comfortable, is not capable of supporting her weight. Bettelheim offers a Freudian interpretation of Goldilocks' explorations suggesting it is regrettable she is unable to find a place for herself in their home which also explains his uneasiness with the tale's conclusion:

As for the beds, Goldilocks finds Father Bear's bed too high at the head, and Mother bear's too high at the foot, showing that both their roles and intimacy with them are out of reach for

Goldilocks. Only Baby Bear's things fit her "just right". So nothing seems left to her but the role of the child. But not quite: as Goldilocks sits in Baby Bear's chair, which we are told "was neither too hard, nor too soft, but just right, the bottom of the chair came out, and down came hers, plump upon the ground." So, obviously, she has outgrown the small child's chair. The bottom indeed dropped out of her life because she could not find success in being or relating to, first, Father and, second, Mother; but it did so only when after these failures Goldilocks reluctantly tried to return to an infantile, babylike existence. For Goldilocks there is no happy ending - from her failure to find what is fitting for her, she awakes as if from a bad dream, and runs away.¹⁰

Bettleheim understands the dynamics of this story, but his Freudian bias prevents him from interpreting it as a complete tale. It is not just the roles within the family but the context of the young nuclear family itself which Goldilocks has outgrown. Because Psychoanalysis puts paramount emphasis on early familial relations, resolution of developmental questions is usually viewed as the completion of unresolved family business rather than as the continuing pursuit of goals in the world at large. By her testing, Goldilocks demonstrates she must move beyond the cloistered life of early childhood, that she has outgrown its restrictions. Her discovery by the bears portrays an image which suggests the move will be forced upon her..

Adlerian theory and therapy explore family constellation, birth order and life style factors in order to free clients, adults and children, from the restrictions of outgrown expectations. Individual Psychology is concerned when children show signs of timidity or pampering as these are life styles which promise poor development of social interest. Goldilocks is not timid and her movement virtually guarantees she will not continue to be pampered. Children can find relief in Goldilocks' escape as they know she is returning to a real world family in the real world. The bears are a caricature of an

¹⁰ Bettleheim, Uses 221.

infantile, diminished view of family life. The humour in this tale scarcely suggests the sombre tones it evokes in Bettelheim's view. Unless the child is obsessed with an excessive sense of propriety, the spectacle of Goldilocks' pratfall and the bears' exaggerated indignation at the discovery of their intruder usually prompt laughter. This tale reminds the child not to be afraid of widening horizons but to keep moving with spirit and humour. Goldilocks is not running away from an unfinished past but towards the challenges of a promising future.

Because it beckons towards an expansive, more interesting future, "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" fosters social interest. The comic relief, the curiosity of the heroine and the excitement of her escape dispel feelings of discouragement or any sense of inferiority the child might identify with in the story. But the focal point or goal which is the centre of this tale is the discovery of the need for self transformation, to move beyond the world one is born into by evolving a more responsive life-style. This tale appeals to a younger reader, more likely a listener, than the more sophisticated *Beauty and the Beast*. However, the theme or goal of self discovery, growth and the changes that entails for the life-style is important in both tales. The important difference between these tales is that in "*Beauty and the Beast*" much effort and sacrifice is required to make significant life-style transformations. In "*Goldilocks and the Three Bears*", the life-style which is just emerging must be acknowledged and accepted. The two tales highlight very different phases of the identity seeking process.

Curiosity which triggers Goldilocks' explorations of the bears' house ceases to be an adequate motivator by the end of the story. She is no longer lost once she realizes what she must leave behind. As in so many other fairy tales there is an imperative to leave the woods where the action takes place

with the implication that the principal character will then enter the wider world as an equal coparticipant and contributing human being.

Little Red Riding Hood

The story of "Little Red Riding Hood" or "Little Red Cap" as the Grimm Brothers version is known is one which has been reworked and reexamined by many writers, critics and teachers. The cover drawing for Bettelheim's The Uses of Enchantment is taken from an 1872 illustration of "Little Red Riding Hood" by Gustave Doré. Freudians have found in this tale an extensive exemplification of their views on conflict and development.

Erich Fromm has developed an analysis in which he concludes the tale furnishes

...a good illustration of Freud's views while at the same time offering a variation of the theme of the male-female conflict that we found in the Oedipus trilogy.¹¹

With this citation, Dr. Harry Elam, a 1975 certificate student at the Alfred Adler Institute of Chicago begins his analysis in a paper entitled, An Adlerian Approach to the Analysis of Children's Fairy Tales. Dr. Elam's paper is brief, but advances a number of ideas consistent with this thesis and offers a promising strategy for an Adlerian reading of fairy tales or other works of literature. Elam's reading of "Little Red Cap" is particularly thorough. In his own comparisons between Adlerian and Freudian readings of this tale, Elam based a major part of his research on the Freudian approach as expressed in Fromm's work. His paper predates the first edition of Bettelheim.

Bettelheim begins his analysis by visualizing the arresting image of the wolf devouring the beautiful young child at the climax of the story. He

¹¹ Erich Fromm, The Forgotten Language, (New York: Grove Press, 1957) 235-241 cited in Elam 13.

criticizes the Perrault version because it concludes at that point with a cautionary verse, but without a satisfying denouement. Bettelheim believes it is unfairly unsettling to leave children with a dismal ending and a 'belaboured' moral threatening dreadful consequences for minor trespasses. Other aspects of Perrault's version which disturb Bettelheim include the unresolved unfairness of grandmother's fate and the lurid details of Red Riding Hood's seduction by the wolf. Little Red Riding Hood is changed from a naïve, attractive young girl, who is induced to neglect mother's warnings and enjoy herself in what she consciously believes to be innocent ways, into nothing but a fallen woman.¹²

Bettelheim is very sure that the wolf does symbolize nefarious sexuality and like Fromm, that his presence in the story is an indicator of unresolved oedipal issues. However, he is also appreciative that the Grimm brothers version deemphasizes this explicitly erotic aspect of the tale, focussing instead on the question of Red Riding Hood's flower-picking, as a distraction from her duty (and a displacement of the temptation issue) to deliver the goodies. In brief, Bettelheim also wishes to draw attention to the familiar Freudian conflict between pleasure principle and reality principle.

The fascinated ambiguity on Red Riding Hood's face in the Doré illustration captures the entwined feelings of fearful repulsion and mesmerized excitement which the wolf evokes. Bettelheim's explanation is that conscious and unconscious impulses are in conflict within the child, paralyzing her into inaction. Because he believes her will is being contested by powerful, sophisticated and, for her, inscrutable drives, Bettelheim is not highly critical of the young lady, perhaps another reason why he rejects

¹² Bettelheim, *Uses* 169.

Perrault's scolding moral tone.

Elam reviews much of the same material as Bettelheim. He makes some similar observations but confines his analysis to the Grimms' version. However, as might be anticipated, he is at pains to distinguish the Adlerian approach. First, his Adlerian analysis attempts to be holistic and second, it does not establish a primarily psycho-sexual framework. Elam notes important details about the child and her own self-image which the Freudians disregard. She has a special relationship with a particularly doting grandmother which pleases her a great deal. The only name by which we know her derives from a gift from Grandmother setting Little Red Cap off from the other children. She is a pampered child. Elam notes that Red accepts the task of taking goodies to Grandmother readily but dismisses her mother's admonition to take care with a condescending reply. Her motives are clear if not purely altruistic. Carrying the goodies makes her feel important and Grandmother is one of her favorite people. Red Cap is skilful at manipulating people through her charm and pretty appearance. She has mother and grandmother wrapped around her finger, so when she meets the wolf, she is confident she can deal with him easily. For these reasons Red is an example of faulty motivation underlying otherwise acceptable behaviour. She also gives the reader an example of why doing the right thing for the wrong reasons is not good enough. Her judgement is undermined because she is attending to the wrong cues.

The wolf, seeing that she is trying to flatter him, suspects that Little Red Cap is herself very susceptible to flattery. Indeed, it is a testament to the wolf's own vanity that he allows her to continue her journey, rather than devouring her on the spot, so certain is he of his deceptive abilities to catch her later. When he finds her in the woods, the girl is walking 'very gravely', full of her own importance for undertaking her very serious mission. But the wolf

reminds her that because she is so special she deserves a chance to enjoy the merry woods. She rationalizes her decision to dally (since it is still early in the day) as she rationalizes her decision to stop picking flowers (by remembering her errand). Red maintains an act which is nearly her undoing. Because she is pampered, she does exactly what she pleases and expects service from others. Because she thinks she is special, and especially good, she maintains a facade of cheery helpfulness to hide her unattractive, self-centred impulses. The wolf plays to this need and disarms her with his charm. Immersed in her fantasies about herself, Red Cap does not foresee the wolf's treachery.

At grandmother's house, Little Red Cap is put off by the missing presence. This grandmother is different; she does not seem the same to the little girl; but in the familiar nightcap and gown and through the attention given, the child allows herself to believe this might be her grandmother, which better suits her needs. The error is costly and Red is swallowed like grandmother by the voracious wolf. From an Adlerian perspective the wolf symbolizes the vanity which characterizes Little Red Cap (in her little velvet crown) and which she shares with Grandmother, the culpable adult accomplice who crowned her and now shares the wolf's stomach. In other words, both the pampered child and the doting relative are consumed by vanity. Bettelheim writes of male dominance as associated with the ruthless wolf as an oedipal phenomenon. Elam, however, alludes instead to "the masculine protest", the Adlerian idea that dominance is often associated with males but is actually a behavioral tool used by both sexes to win power. Adler's concept furthermore distinguishes unequivocally between the male gender identified in the protest and the psychosexual complex as outlined in psychoanalysis.

The arrival of the huntsman introduces a different kind of relationship into the tale. The huntsman does not demonstrate male dominance, but genuine social interest in his concern for grandmother and in his controlled reaction on discovering the wolf. He is a fit rescuer, kind and resourceful. Both Bettelheim and Elam would agree that the huntsman is more than a *deus ex machina* for the denouement. Representing cooperative values he assists at the rebirth of child and grandmother from the belly of the evil beast. In fetching the stones, Red Cap demonstrates her new ability to cooperate. She is also much happier in this cooperative role. Bettelheim knows the change in the heroine is important but only the Adlerian reading gives a fully satisfying explanation:

Children (and adults, too) must be able to believe that reaching a higher form of existence is possible if they master the developmental steps this requires. Stories which tell that this is not only possible but likely have a tremendous appeal to children, because such tales combat the ever-present fear that they won't be able to make this transition, or that they'll lose too much in the process.¹³

From the above explanation we realize Bettelheim is aware of the transformation which has occurred in "Little Red Cap" but attribution of the change to "mastery of developmental processes" is too distant and abstract to convince adult readers, let alone children that he knows the reason. Elam's common sense explanation offers the essential advantage of being directly supported by the text:

There is nascent movement towards cooperation by her [Red Cap's] act of getting large stones to fill the wolf's belly. We can infer that from this she probably began to feel that she had something in common with the huntsman and grandmother. As noted by Dreikurs, [a prominent Adlerian] "

¹³ Bettelheim, *Uses* 179.

readiness to cooperate, which is one of the characteristics of a good comrade, is tested most rigorously in difficult situations."¹⁴

In the death of the wolf the three rejoice at completing a successful task together in the full spirit of cooperation. The huntsman takes the wolf skin as his due and Red Cap finally gives grandmother the food she has brought. As Elam explains, the child now thinks again of her mother in a new way:

The significance of her return to thinking about mother is probably related to a different feeling now about mother's admonitions and concerns. The possibility exists that she recognized that she had not been cooperating with her mother. Mother was concerned about dangerous situations and had tried to educate the little girl, who being pampered, made the judgement that mother did not know best. It is possible that the events that transpired since she left mother made an indelible impression on her that there was fun, joy and happiness in cooperating with mother, another human being.¹⁵

In summary, this fairy tale meets the goals of educational process which characterize Adlerian therapy and have served as benchmark criteria in this chapter. The huntsman introduces the crucial transformative element of social interest. Red Cap herself overcomes her vanity and therefore the feelings of inferiority behind them. These developments are evidence of a life-style and goal reorientation. Correcting faulty motivation is the focus of this tale as noted above; Red Cap shows us the dangers of this kind of error before she is eaten and the advantages of correcting it when she is released from the wolf's belly. The discovery that attempting to manipulate others through her superior charm has led to her downfall helps Red to recognize she is human and susceptible like others, no less and no more. In the end something new in her character spurs her to cooperate in the crucial task of

¹⁴ Elam 18.

¹⁵ Elam 19.

loading the wolf (as the symbol of vanity) down with the stones which will cause him to tear himself apart. We know she acts on the instructions of the huntsman, but it is a grateful and chastened Red Cap who is willing to follow them.

The Goose Girl

Bettleheim describes "The Goose Girl", a Grimms brothers tale of unjust betrayal and restoration as helpful in the transition to autonomy. The story describes a young princess sent to a distant land to marry a prince to whom she is betrothed. Bettleheim claims that this story prepares young readers for the eventual separation from their parents which begins with the resolution of oedipal feelings of attraction and guilt concerning the parent of the opposite sex. The handkerchief stained with three drops of her blood which the princess mother has given her suggests menstruation and therefore sexual maturity. When the princess loses the handkerchief it obscures her destiny as a woman and a bride, making her susceptible to the bullying of the maid who then usurps the princess' identity.

Adler differed with Freud in his interpretation of the maturing process. Many different cultural patterns offer coherent alternatives to psychosexual explanations of folklore which at least compel our consideration. "The Goose Girl", like many popular folk tales is riddled with imagery of adolescent realities and rites of passage. This gives such tales depth, as the imagery applies to children from infancy through latency, indeed, from puberty on through adulthood. These same features also offer breadth of significance as they have meaning for the whole traditional community. In this sense, the didactic impact of the fairy tale is diffuse and should not be understood as peculiarly relevant to the child at a specific phase of emotional development. By extension it is also very limiting to confine interpretation to the concepts

represented by a single school of psychology. The Jungian construct of the collective unconscious is often put forward as an explanation of the powerful, numinous symbols which virtually haunt tales like "The Goose Girl". Yet archetypal language and imagery can be recognized and appreciated without recourse to accept either 'the collective' or 'the unconscious' as clear, distinct entities. Northrop Frye's framework offers a plausible context:

In Christianity the archetype of the completed romance is Christ rising from the the dragon of death and hell with his redeemed captives; but the central figure need not take on such portentous overtones. The heroine who is saved from rape or sacrifice, even if she merely avoids Mr. Wrong and marries Mr. Right, is reenacting the ancient ritual which in Greek religion is called the anabasis of Kore, the rising of a maiden, Psyche or Cinderella or Richardson's Pamela or Aristophanes Peace, from a lower to a higher world.¹⁶

The Goose Girl like Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White is ritualistically raised, that is restored to the higher world where she belongs. The Goose Girl is saved by the intercession of the king instead of her intended groom but this does not seriously alter the arresting pattern of a deep-rooted convention. Conventions like this one have been carried forward through our tradition since prehistory not necessarily because we can not help it but most likely because they help us form personal fictions and goals in our own lives. Frye demonstrates systematically, thoroughly but wittily that the skein of archetypal allusion runs through every phase of our cultural experience to the extent that we know much more than we admit about its structure:

If the hero of a romance returns from a quest disguised, flings off his beggar's rags, and stands forth in the resplendent scarlet cloak of the prince, we do not have a theme which has necessarily descended from a solar myth; we have the literary device of displacement. The hero does something which we

¹⁶ Northrop Frye, The Secular Scripture : A Study of the Structure of Romance (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976) 163.

may or may not, as we like, associate with the myth of the sun returning at dawn. If we are reading the story as critics, with an eye to structural principles, we shall make the association, because the solar analogy explains why the hero's act is an effective and conventional incident. If we are reading the story for fun, we need not bother: that is, some murky "subconscious" factor in our response will take care of the association. ¹⁷

The princess who becomes a goose girl demonstrates the consequences of a certain form of nonassertive life style. In short, the principal lesson she must learn from Mosak's list is to accept herself as equal among her fellow human beings with needs and desires as worthy of fulfillment as those of others. By carrying her deferential approach to extremes, she loses the gifts her parents have given her and almost loses her destiny. Despite this near disaster, she remains true to her nature and events eventually restore her status. Her maid, on the other hand, is very enterprising in a devious and hostile way. The princess seems to demonstrate the life style of a 'pleaser', someone who wants to satisfy everyone and is always dependent on the approval and evaluation of others for her own self-esteem and worth. When she loses the handkerchief her mother has given her, she is so devastated, she is weakened and loses sight of current reality. When the head of Falada, the talking horse speaks to her, he bemoans the agony her mother would feel knowing this is what matters most to her. By her inaction the princess ignores the consequences of the dreadful injustices, including Falada's death, which she helps bring upon herself and others. She does not feel the justifiable wrath she might well harbour towards the false maid. For the maid is a 'getter' who exploits and manipulates life and others in a fairly predictable way. ¹⁸

¹⁷ Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1976) 188.

¹⁸ Dinkmeyer 93.

The lesson of any life style identification is one of trade-offs. The princess does not need to 'grow up' in order to overcome her difficulties but rather to accept the risks her passivity creates and to curb its more excessive forms. Her confession to the hearth, which the king overhears, represents a compromise, replacing a large error with a small one, which sets the wheels of justice back in motion. The false maid is unwilling to compromise with her life style's demands and unwittingly pronounces a sentence for herself which is as humiliating as it is ghastly.¹⁹

Bettleheim notes the turning point in the tale occurs when the princess become goose girl lets her hair down but refuses to let the goose boy grasp hold of her tresses. This change is the result of a new perception of self, the manifestation of a new impulse to assert herself and reverse the damaging tendency of her previously passive life style. Adlerians believe we choose our life styles, although at an age when we can scarcely comprehend the consequences. By the fifth year of life, the individual's posture in life is virtually fixed. Even for the very young audiences who hear fairy tales read aloud to them, the opportunity to make drastic life-style alterations is already practically limited. For life-style is tied in very closely with identity. So to abandon the life-style we must risk denying the self.

The therapeutic value of the fairy tale is actually all the more important as a consequence. Since the child (or adult) is not likely to forsake the life-style, normally one must learn to live with it. The life-style can be protected by denying reality as the princess does when she accepts her totally unwarranted degradation. Incidentally, Bettelheim's suggestion that losing the handkerchief is either immature or subliminally fateful provides a key

¹⁹ Bettelheim, Uses 137.

point of distinction between Freudian and Adlerian interpretation. Bettelheim accepts the princess' own conclusion - that she is irredeemably guilty in some deep, symbolic sense - which is in reality, nonsensical. What matters is that *she* interprets the loss of the handkerchief fatalistically and falls into a swoon of helplessness.

The princess puts herself in jeopardy by capitulating to the implicit judgement of her own philosophy. Things turn around for her when circumstances create the rough equivalent of an Adlerian therapeutic strategy. That strategy is known as paradoxical intention. An example of its use would occur when a therapist encourages a child who refuses to go to school to try harder yet to stay away. Usually, this robs the rebellious act of its pay-off, namely the reaction of authority. In "The Goose Girl", the degraded princess is asked to endure one more unmerited indignity at the hands of the insensitive goose boy. The consequence is that the identity she hitherto strove to defend ineffectively by her submissiveness is now demonstrably threatened itself by further submission. This paradox at last reverses her behavior. At an intuitive level, it is a universal lesson.

Although she has many allies, the princess betrays them through her inaction until she learns to show courage where her own interests are involved. This is a subtle but important demonstration of social interest as it shows we are interdependent and that social interest is more than pure altruism. In some insidious sense the princess feels a sense of inferiority she interprets as obligation. Because it denies the princess her self worth, this false sense of duty turns both against her and itself leaving her trapped by feelings of despair. The princess eventually reaches the point of personal indignity where she must make a change in her flawed life-style. She emerges from her timidity gradually but the turning point is when she makes

it a personal goal to be treated as an equal. This makes her anabasis to her rightful stature possible and presumably leads to her undertaking the social tasks including love and a proper contribution to mankind at the level of her capability.

Cinderella

One of the most popular and best loved fairy tales, "Cinderella" is perhaps also one of the most encouraging stories in the western tradition. Bettelheim claims much of its significance emerges from a dual track interpretation which he believes is essential to a proper understanding. The child who enjoys "Cinderella" will respond mainly to one or another of the surface meanings most of the time. But at various moments in his development toward self-understanding, depending on what is problematic to him, the child's unconscious will be enlightened by one of the story's hidden meanings, indicated by some important detail.²⁰

Bettelheim's "Cinderella" is really two stories: one which appeals to the conscious mind and a second directed to the unconscious. According to Bettelheim the most important of these is the unconscious. The overt conscious story line appeals to the child's sense of justice, addresses the question of sibling rivalry, recognizes the possibility that one can be raised from filth and cinders to great heights and recalls the importance of keeping faith with the best of the past such as the memory of the good mother. The covert unconscious story line is directly related to the sexual issues of adult relations. Desire and apprehension, deep-seated concerns over gender roles in sexual relations and reassurance of adequacy are covered in the unconscious sexual subtext of the fairy tale. Bettelheim suggests that this

²⁰ Bettelheim, Uses 273.

material gives this familiar tale its strongest attraction by offering a powerful but subliminal sex education to child readers. The slipper ceremony affords Bettelheim a chance to expose his subtext:

In the slipper ceremony which signifies the betrothal of Cinderella and the prince, he selects her because in symbolic fashion she is the uncastrated woman who relieves him of his castration anxiety, which would interfere with a happy marital relationship. She selects him because he appreciates her in her "dirty" sexual aspects, lovingly accepts her vagina in the form of the slipper, and approves of her desire for a penis, symbolized by her tiny foot fitting within the slipper vagina. That is why the prince brings the beautiful slipper to Cinderella and why she puts her tiny foot into it- only as she does so is she recognized as the right bride. But as she slips her foot into the slipper she asserts that she, too, will be active in their sexual relationship; she will do things, too. And she also gives the assurance that she is not and never was lacking in anything; she has everything that fits, as her foot fits into the slipper. ²¹

From the Freudian point of view, the subconscious message, discernible through psychoanalytic technique is more important and more meaningful than questions about the child's position within his family, ways to cope with debasement, dealing with aggressive siblings, assaults on self-esteem and so forth. On this the Adlerian perspective is reversed. Adler understood psychosexual interpretation and used the technique when he was associated with Freud. He and Freud parted company not so much over whether psychosexual interpretation was valid but over how important it was to a complete appreciation of human behaviour. In this respect, Adlerians favour common sense but not shallow interpretations. The reaction of the average reader - adult or child would be astonishment at Bettelheim's reading of the slipper ceremony. For some prudish or innocent readers his analysis might appear indelicate but the strongest reaction would be from readers who would

²¹ Bettelheim, Uses 271.

simply say it does not relate to what the story means to them.

Adlerian criticism begins with conscious focus. From experience Adlerians know that most children are concerned with the basic question of a stance towards life. Is it necessary to fight with siblings to assure a place in the sun? Is Cinderella's inferior position proof that she is inferior? Does the world think so? What is the point of working hard, keeping faith or showing loyalty when your reward is humiliation? Children still formulating and refining their life-styles are keen to test the answers the fairy tale gives to questions like these. According to Adler, the life-style is embedded and complex and therefore is never fully comprehended on the level of consciousness. There may be an effort to deny aspects of the life-style where these conflict with socially accepted norms. But the life-style serves the self and wherever the self believes it can be better served by greater awareness of the life-style, Adlerians believe consciousness can expeditiously expand to encompass areas Freudians would consign more or less permanently to the unconscious.

Cinderella embodies social interest; she is a good daughter and a loyal sister. She is seen to reject the bullying masculine protest of her stepsisters as an appropriate strategy. Children also see the stepsisters' inappropriate aggression reach ironic and self-destructive proportions when they mutilate themselves in hopes of becoming the prince's betrothed. Cinderella represents the profound feelings of displacement of every first born child who watches with ambivalence or consternation the arrival of later siblings. Children of blended families, a significant phenomenon of our times, will find even stronger bonds of identification with her situation.

Like Bettelheim, Adlerians would probably prefer the Brothers Grimm version of the tale to Perrault's account. The Grimms' Cinderella is less of a

martyr and more credible. Her stepsisters are attractive and therefore more of a real threat. The hints that her father has a lingering concern for her are poignant and extend an important sustaining hope represented by the hazel branch which holds magic properties. Perrault's Cinderella is more passive and does not have to work as hard to secure her good fortune. In general the Grimms Brothers' version is a more complex and intriguing story. Evidence that its appeal over Perrault's version derives from richer subconscious allusions is intriguing. However, from a literary standpoint, Bettelheim's is a superfluous argument since the Grimms' version is clearly richer in *conscious* allusion and presents more credible characters. Yet all versions of "Cinderella" show it is possible to find an effective, courageous way to overcome adversity while fostering strong bonds of cooperation and social interest.

Like the Goose Girl, the principal goal which Cinderella promotes is the importance of believing one is equal among other human beings. Cinderella is degraded and undervalued. Yet she once enjoyed a place of honour in her family before her mother's death. Is she not the psychological equivalent of the dethroned eldest child? Unlike the Goose Girl, Cinderella attempts to improve her position. She asks to be allowed to go to the ball, completing an arduous assignment with the help of the birds only to be denied by her stepmother. Cinderella demonstrates social interest in the dutiful performance of the tasks assigned her. Yet she does not give in to discouragement even when disappointed and does not accept the inferior status assigned her. Going to the palace in the enchanted garb she receives and meeting the prince helps her reformulate her life-style by furnishing much more expansive goals. In this sense her motivation changes, that is rises to a more appropriate level of aspiration reflecting the recognition of

Cinderella's full equality as an adult with a complete dignified contribution to make.

Jack and the Beanstalk

Bettleheim's analysis of this traditional British fairy tale centres around the successful resolution of oedipal conflict. Jack acquires the magic seeds which grow overnight into the phallic beanstalk through a family crisis:

We are told that the good cow Milky White, which until then had supported child and mother, has suddenly stopped giving milk. Thus the expulsion from an infantile paradise begins; it continues with the mother's deriding Jack's belief in the magic power of his seeds. The phallic beanstalk permits Jack to engage in oedipal conflict with the ogre, which he survives and finally wins, thanks only to the oedipal mother's taking his side against her own husband. Jack relinquishes his reliance on the belief in the magic power of phallic self-assertion as he cuts down the beanstalk; and this opens the way toward a development of mature masculinity. ²²

Bettleheim detects the restless desire for active involvement which Jack demonstrates. He notes the young hero is experimental and curious, swapping the cow for magic beans and scrambling up the beanstalk when it appears. But Bettleheim also believes the psychosexual imagery such as the phallic beanstalk or the cow which is a displacement for mother's breast is the anchoring factor that reveals the meaning of Jack's activity. Perhaps this is true in one sense which Bettleheim describes. There is a period in the resolution of oedipal conflict when the child recognizes he is detached from the parent of the opposite sex and discovers his own genitals; then the child becomes fascinated with his own magical sense of sexuality. As the imagery shows, there are at least traces of that in Jack's adventure. However, from an

²² Bettleheim, Uses 187.

Adlerian perspective, this approach tends to narrow the developmental picture as well as to minimize the action of the story:

Activity must not be confused with courage, although there is no courage without activity. But only the activity of an individual who plays the game, cooperates and shares in life can be designated as courage. There are many variations of courage, as well as mixed cases and cases where courage appears only conditionally, for example in the event of extreme emergency or with the assistance of others. ²³

Courage, according to the Adlerians is not a distant ideal but an indispensable prerequisite for a full, meaningful life. The importance of activity is paramount and in practice courage, activity and social interest are aspects of the same phenomenon. Jack is an active, courageous individual who sometimes miscues but always battles back to personal victory. The quality which keeps Jack centered is his social interest, his concern for the welfare of his own family and his sense of responsibility in the world. The educational goal most prominently expressed in the story of Jack is the promotion of the self as a fully contributing social being. In that sexual maturation is a metaphor for these achievements the Freudian imagery makes a valid contribution to the story. But if that imagery is allowed to carry the meaning of the story, the full implications of Jack's heroism are lost. This distinction is at the heart of the difference between Freud and Adler, historically and theoretically. Adler believed that psychosexual language often obscured the dynamics of intrapersonal and interpersonal psychology. He began instead with the assumption that behaviour has purpose. The inward and backward focus which is part of the causally oriented structure of Psychoanalysis was what Adler wanted to move beyond.

²³ Ansbacher, Individual 166.

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If Jack, for instance, had become discouraged at his mother's reproaches or absorbed in his newly found capabilities, he would not have claimed his full reward nor slain the cannibal giant. There are many fairy tales like "Jack and the Beanstalk" including the "Brave Little Tailor" and "Jack the Giant Killer" which illustrate the uses of courage as much as enchantment. In the telling, children warm to descriptions of the bravery and cleverness of the hero, nor are they unimpressed by the hero's concern for others. In both the real and fantasy worlds which children inhabit, sexual development or maturation is only an aspect of the whole story.

Jack also exhibits the full complement of Mosak's criterion goals in his own way. His dutiful and courageous nature is not founded in vanity or bravado but in social interest, specifically, concern for his family. He must overcome feelings of foolishness and inferiority at selling the cow for the beans and a dreadful test of confidence which the challenge of the ogre represents. In his courage and achievements Jack grows to the point where he no longer needs the enchanted realm of the beanstalk to steal strength from and successfully brings down the evil ogre to his doom. Acquiring the ogre's treasures and chopping down the beanstalk represent the development of Jack's life-style to the point where he owns his own powers and no longer needs to rely on luck or magic. Over the course of the tale as Jack grows in confidence and wisdom he resets his goals and life-style from surviving to thriving. In the process he becomes a man, equal to the tasks at hand and other human beings. He becomes self sufficient and a contributing member of the community. When the beanstalk is felled, Jack now lives completely in a world of fellow human beings.

The Sleeping Beauty

Freudians and Adlerians would interpret the main thematic material of "The Sleeping Beauty" quite similarly in some respects. This is a story about sexual maturation, about parental concern and obstacles which can delay the assumption of the life task of love. There would be agreement also that Sleeping Beauty's parents are over protective but that their efforts are in vain. However, although the ending is indisputably happy, Adlerians would be inclined to see the events leading to the conclusion somewhat differently.

Bettelheim believes the long sleep of the entire household like Sleeping Beauty's sheltered childhood and the deaths of the unsuccessful suitors entangled in the briars are justifiable and necessary for the princess' growth to womanhood. Adlerians would disagree. All these events are unfortunate and perhaps might have been avoided.

The parents' slighting of the thirteenth fairy is only the ostensible cause of the spell and its consequences. Extreme measures like burning all the distaffs in the country (distaffs and spinning wheels are classic symbols of the passage of time as spun yarn is of fate) will not protect children from the hazards of maturation. Bettelheim regards Sleeping Beauty's slumber as the ritualistic rendering of a passive hiatus between adolescence and womanhood. However, Adlerians observe that it is timidity in the child produced by pampering parents which induces this kind of psychological lethargy and the freezing of forward movement. Sleeping Beauty is raised under a cloud which is not of her own making. Symbolically, the threat to her safety involves a common instrument of everyday work which is denied to the whole kingdom. Never having seen a distaff, Sleeping Beauty is enchanted when she finally sees one at work. Like Snow White, Sleeping Beauty must be awakened to social interest by the caring intercession of someone outside the family constellation

allowing her to move forward again into the world, to embrace the task of love and to embark on building a family of her own. The message for parents in this story is therefore clear: shielding children from knowledge of life and their own future renders them less fit to deal with circumstances. For children the lesson is not to allow themselves to be cocooned from experience, to recognize risks which must be taken and have faith that they will eventually win out.

As in many stories involving entranced heroines, social interest proceeds to a certain point within Sleeping Beauty's own experience. However, full maturation of the potential for social interest requires timely intervention from outside. The feelings of inferiority or discouragement in this story stem from the curse which hangs over the kingdom and the inhibition which her unnaturally sheltered life forces on Sleeping Beauty. The pricking of the finger and the slumber of the kingdom represent the life-style metamorphosis necessary if Sleeping Beauty is ever to live a full life. The motivational shift is enabled after the terms of the enchantment are fulfilled and the entire kingdom can resume a life based upon normal human goals and not fear lest the curse befall. The lifting of the curse and Sleeping Beauty's introduction to love restore her to normality and therefore equality and offers every likelihood she can become a fully contributing and fulfilled person.

Conclusion

One does not have to be a Freudian to recognize and accredit the text of sexual symbolism nor a Christian to interpret and understand the power of religious iconography over twenty centuries of culture. Likewise, as Frye and various taxonomists of folktales have demonstrated, orthodox Jungian belief is not a prerequisite for a solid appreciation of archetypes. Whether or not one

needs to be an Adlerian to share the literary perspective of Individual Psychology may be another matter. Because of the dynamic cast of his personality, Adler resisted those academic processes which codify and identify distinct schools of thought. He was an influential person and effected enormous, almost spontaneous positive change on thousands of followers and patients. Unfortunately his success also posed a great threat to others. Freud never forgave him for their schism and attempted throughout his life to deny what he could and incorporate what he had to of Adler's ideas into his own writings in order to neutralize their impact. Adler's clinical successes led to the establishment of dozens of family education institutes throughout Austria and Europe dedicated to fostering democratic ideals in family life. These, of course, fell afoul with the spread of Nazism and were systematically dismantled by Hitler's policies.

Beset as his principles were by both theoretical and physical attack, Adler's reluctance to codify them has not helped to ensure their survival. However, Adler was a holistic thinker rigorously devoted to common sense. Consequently, scholars like the Ansbachers and clinicians like Mosak have been able to keep the Adlerian approach alive. Time has proven to be a friend of Individual Psychology as its practices prove effective and its precepts appear more in the mainstream of humanist thought. In one sense, any reader who shares the concerns and interests of Individual Psychology can be said to be an Adlerian. That criterion implies a fairly loose definition considering Adler was seeking the highest common denominator of human social behaviour as the basis for his teaching. Furthermore, Adler's consistent use of relatively jargon free language communicated his message widely but at the cost of more precise definition. Adler was more of a visionary than a dogmatist. He often acted as if his ideas were already widely acknowledged in

psychology and psychiatry, perhaps because he was well received personally among fellow practitioners.

An Adlerian reading of a fairy tale is a common sense reading. It is conspicuously Adlerian when it can be shown to demonstrate a specific principle or insight of Individual Psychology. The Adlerian bias is actively positive, illustrating the individual movement of the main characters against the social backdrop. The Adlerian reader will be sceptical of subconscious, passive and isolating explanations for various interludes or events since these are not easily inferred from the overall context. Individual Psychology claims to be a psychology of use not possession. This mostly means that qualities ascribed to living individuals or fictional characters are valid labels only as long as those traits continue to serve personal goals. Behaviour must be understood as much in the context of current environment as past events. Therefore, personality traits attributed to individuals must also be interpreted in the light of why they might have been assigned and by whom. Because Individual Psychology is holistic and humanistic, an Adlerian reading is usually eclectic and pluralistic.

One of the more disconcerting aspects of Psychoanalysis is the dubious shadow it casts over all critics and criticism by its assumption there must be repressed elements in the critique as well as the text. Just to get past the implicit accusations of his own theoretical premises, requires the psychoanalytic critic to immerse himself in Freudian terminology and argument. To Bruno Bettelheim's credit, although he is an orthodox Freudian, he does not turn the witch hunter's arsenal on those he disagrees with. Adlerians, very precise in their diagnostics and empirical distinctions do not split hairs on questions of psychological orthodoxy. As Joseph Wilder puts it,

... most observations and ideas of Alfred Adler have subtly and quietly permeated modern psychological thinking to such a degree that the proper question is not whether one is an Adlerian but how much of an Adlerian one is. ²⁴

²⁴ Kurt A. Adler and Danica Deutsch, *Essays in Individual Psychology* (New York: Grove Press 1959) as quoted in Corsini by Harold Mosak, "Adlerian Psychology" 88.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION:

ADLER'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE READING OF FAIRY TALES

Some time after their parting, Freud remarked caustically that the theoretical direction he expected Adler to take would involve substituting aggression for sex:

A couple of years later Freud heard that Stanley Hall had invited Adler to lecture in America and added: "Presumably the object is to save the world from sexuality and base it on aggression."¹

From the biographies of both men and the transcripts of the Vienna Society the extent of the acrimony between them can be appreciated decades later. The differences between them were more fundamental than theory: they were temperamental. Adler was an extravert and Freud was an introvert. Freud found Adler's manner overbearing and threatening; Adler regarded Freud as sullen and controlling. Not surprisingly, the basis for Adler's theory, diagnosis and therapy would be interpersonal principles while Freud would pursue a psychology based upon intrapersonal dynamics. With the passage of time, psychology has pursued both directions and in the process recognized our concept of mankind must encompass both dimensions.

This thesis observes that to the extent that commentators and critics have favoured the psychoanalytic approach they have tended to neglect the interpersonal dimension Individual Psychology explores. New evidence about

¹Ernest Jones, The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud (New York: Basic Books, 1961) 315.

the nature of human consciousness links the brain and goal seeking behaviour more closely to the Adlerian configuration. The thrust of therapeutic development in recent years has been towards treatments engaging the self or ego in the events of the client's own life. This Adlerian therapeutic spirit involves both therapist and client in a relationship which leads the client into dialogue and engagement with others. Democratic values, which are essential for the kind of resolution Adlerians favour, have grown enormously in influence throughout our society. The direction of our culture and literature has been changed by a new awareness of the rights of women, the disabled, the disadvantaged and even children. Adler was one of the first to recognize the many ways in which children are ignored and to link their poor treatment to the low self esteem, feelings of inferiority, discouragement and behavioural problems children experience. In many cases the therapeutic influence of fairy tales is not only positive but crucial.

In his theory of the most expedient lie or fictional finalism, Adler provided a powerful argument for the social value of literature (if indeed it needs one). Freud believed we imagined our wishes fulfilled but Adler's interpretation of the role of the imagination - as the template of our future reality - is proving more accurate and efficacious. Fiction and poetry are therefore always more than diversionary. The engagement of mind stimulates the reader of literature as it must the writer beforehand to act in creative ways, to affirm the self and to learn from the positive and negative examples of other sensibilities. Literature generally, and especially fairy tales, foster social interest in several ways. As Elam explains, the fairy tale is a school for social understanding. Children who hear a tale share their feelings with one another. They learn to identify the gamut of emotion and to judge the just limits of personal interaction. They learn to participate in a common

cooperative process - the tradition of the folk.² As Frye recognized, the genre of the romance, which includes fairy tales, is closest to wish fulfillment and therefore, more seriously, the goals of the individual; but it is also the most "proletarian" of genres, a restless, almost revolutionary form, seeking new hopes and desires with a childlike freshness.³

Frye acknowledges that there is always a paradoxical element in romance. Balancing its impatient quality is a nostalgia for an imagined golden age in time or space. In the fairy tale, we usually find the typical central figure of lowly state or origin struggling against oppression or adversity, yet eventually gaining wealth and status. This movement between lower and upper classes with its concomitant sympathies can potentially create an impression of divergent identity. This paradox is resolved by Adlerians in the synthesis between the striving of the individual and the fostering of social interest. Perhaps there is also room for a broader synthesis among depth psychologies in the theory of the imagination. Is the "ever after" of the fairy tale not both a Freudian consolation and an Adlerian incentive to venture forth?

On the question of the unconscious, as we have seen, the distinctions are not as clear as the basic positions would suggest. In discovering that Freud's ego harboured unconscious elements and that Adler's unifying self knows more than is understood and hides the very goals of the life-style from comprehension as a defensive manoeuvre, we begin to appreciate that consciousness is a frontier which retains many mysteries concerning its

² Harry P. Elam, "An Adlerian Approach to the Analysis of Children's Fairy Tales," diss., The Alfred Adler Institute, Chicago, 1975, 3.

³ Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1976) 186.

borders. In the conservative position of authors like Bettelheim who intimate it is enough for the fairy tale to suggest the dark shapes of an essentially incomprehensible reality, there is real comfort in that acceptance. However, the active optimism of Individual Psychology is at least as strong a position. As this thesis has attempted to establish, the fairy tale is structured to encourage action, curiosity and exploration. In a world where reality seems to assail the self and deny it any satisfaction, the fictions of the self are enriched by fantasy, folklore and aesthetics. These private deviations from common comprehension sustain the individual through periods where understanding is insufficient to cope rationally with events.⁴

The goal of Psychoanalysis is the strengthening of the ego, basically against the introjected, intrapersonal assaults of the id and the superego. Adler, as we have seen, designed a therapy to strengthen the self although decidedly not at the expense of others. Adler refers to one fairy tale in particular "The Fisherman and His Wife" as a source which helped him gain insight and understanding of human nature. Through the use of dramatic exaggeration and wish fulfilment the seductive dangers of vanity to the personality are underscored. Note that it is not the failure of the wish or goal which is the risk in this story. Rather it is the actual power of desire to effect what is thoughtlessly commanded (until hubris inevitably befalls when the fisherman asks that the order of the universe be overturned) which must be appreciated. To the small child who believes in his own helplessness over his ability to influence his future, this message can be more credibly received in the metaphoric form of the fairy tale. Thus the child may turn from vanity without the painful confrontation with the tendency which could lead to

⁴ Elam 3.

outward denial and perseveration in the destructive behaviour to defend a harmful life-style.

In his dissertation on the analysis of fairy tales, Harry Elam suggests a schematic approach to fairy tales which draws upon the insights and methods of Individual Psychology to offer an Adlerian reading. He advises an acquaintance with the working assumptions of Adler's thought available through his writings. These assumptions would include: the unity of the individual; the perception of goals; the goal of the Life Plan; inferiority feelings; the child's feelings of inferiority during development and the use of fiction in the life-style.

Elam suggests a reading in three distinct phases or "snapshots". The text should first be read from the standpoint of a general social and cultural or "wide angle" contextual view; then from "close-up" repeatedly for detailed understanding of the parts; finally he suggests using a dynamic view, as a video camera might provide integrating the earlier snapshots into a working model of the story.⁵ Despite his distinctive photographic analogy, what Elam offers is an established analytic procedure of taking an overview, a detailed analysis and an integrated synthesis. In itself, this is not a novel innovation. However he closes this section of his paper with a reference to a case study of Adler's which indicates something quite innovative in the Adlerian approach. The case provides an example of how one "problem" child was very fond of "Rumpelstiltskin" and "The Sleeping Beauty". Adler offered his explanation for the child's attachment to these tales in terms of the parallel movement and purpose of behaviour in the life of the child and in the stories themselves. Whether Adler's supposition was exact or not, his assessment that these stories

⁵ Elam 9-11.

were useful to the child is indisputable. Throughout this thesis the argument has necessarily been worded in general terms. But we must end by coming full circle to the title of this dissertation, the comparison with Bettelheim and the idiographic sense of Individual Psychology. It is the purposes of enchantment which keep the tradition of fairy tales alive among the culture of children and form a bond with generations of adults. Fairy tales have the power to strengthen the ties of social interest but they can also function as talismans to the fledgling identity of the child. How they do this will always be somewhat conjectural yet we should not cease in trying to find out because they are important to our children. Like the fairy tale heroes setting forth on their quests, we may discover the purposes of their charms.

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APPENDIX A

THE TWELVE BASIC PROPOSITIONS OF INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY

The Ansbacher edition of *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler* begins a thorough, systematic exposition of Adlerian depth psychology with twelve summarizing propositions or principles. These statements, paraphrased below, describe the theoretical orientation of Individual Psychology. When the propositions are used actively to interpret behavioral or cultural phenomena, they reflect an approach to mankind and culture which differs strikingly from Freudian or Jungian interpretation.¹

Of the twelve principles, the first has always been most closely identified with Adler. Usually, it is learned as a corollary of Psychoanalysis reflecting an early Freudian concession to Adler. Many of these principles or aspects of them are prominent in other psychotherapies such as Carl Rogers' Person-Centered Therapy, the Rational-Emotive therapy of Albert Ellis or William Glasser's Reality Therapy.² Other practitioners recognize the importance of the self concept and goal orientation in the function of the personality. However their principles are largely limited to ethics and clinical procedures or strategies. Adler defined the context of the whole personality in culture.

1. The driving force behind all human activity is the striving from a *feeling of inferiority* towards one of superiority.

¹ Ansbacher, *Individual* 1-2.

² Corsini 131-340.

2. The striving receives its specific definition from an individually unique and consequently fictional goal which is ultimately the creation of the individual.
3. The goal is only dimly or partially perceived by the individual and in that sense, is unconscious.
4. The preeminence of the goal makes it a final cause or ultimate independent variable. Therefore it is the key to understanding the individual .
5. The goal organizes the drama of the individual's life into a self-consistent 'style of life'. All psychological processes, even apparently contradictory behaviors, are only the adaptation of different means to the same end.
6. Psychological categories such as different drives, structural components of personality or modes of distinction like conscious versus unconscious do not represent discrete entities or quantities. All of the above are only aspects of a unified relational system.
7. Objective determiners, such as biological factors and past history, become relative to the goal. The individual determines what their significance will be by the way in which they are used. The style of life creates a deliberately limiting psychological metabolism which functions as if it were totally imposed from without.
8. The style of life shapes the opinions held of both the self and the world. To sustain self-consistency, all psychological processes are subject to its interpretation and censorship.
9. The individual can not be considered apart from the social situation. True isolation is impossible and is attempted occasionally only as a tactical but fictional adaptation to protect the style of life.
10. All important life problems, including certain drive satisfactions, become social problems. All values become social values.
11. Socialization is *not* accomplished by individual repression but through an innate human ability or capability. Adler called this capacity social interest or social feeling. Social interest is both critical for individual adjustment and for sustaining and developing culture.
12. Maladjustment is experienced as increased inferiority feeling. It obscures social interest and exaggerates the uncooperative goal of personal superiority. The individual seeks to solve life problems using a self-centered private sense rather than a task-centred common sense.³

³ Ansbacher, Individual 1-2.

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