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JEREMY WOLFE: Good afternoon. I want to do two things today, and they involve two sets of Freudian jargon. I want to talk about Freud's so-called structural psychology that involves the terms id, ego, and superego-- and will give me a brief chance to talk about Freud's theory of civilization as a whole.

And then, I want to talk about Freud's developmental psychology, which is where we get these notions of an oral, anal, phallic, and then on to latency and adult stages of development. And that'll give me a chance to talk about fairy tales, or more broadly, about the practice of using Freudian ideas to interpret literary texts. The second part may well run into next Tuesday, as I think about it.

But Freud-- Freud thought that babies came into the world thinking that they were coextensive with the universe, that they were everything. Not that they were looking out in space and saying, look, the stars! They're me! But that the initial experience of being a conscious entity was thinking that you're it, you're everything.

It's not a thought that's new with Freud. I won't attempt to do a reading of the piece of Tennyson that I put on the handout, because I discover I'm a bad reader of Tennyson. But-- but if you read that, you will see Tennyson saying very much the same thing, that the job of an infant is to learn the use of I and me, and finds, I am not what I see and other than the things I touched. You've got to figure out what's you and what's not you.

Freud thought this little bundle of-- that this universe of a baby wanted one thing-- which I talked about last time. The kid wants pleasure, and the kid wants pleasure now, any way he/she can get it. That collection of unbridled desires is what Freud called the id.

Now, this all looks very fancy-- or not very fancy-- it looks like jargon. But in Freud's original writing, it's not particularly jargony. It is just a latinization of the word for it-- the animal piece of you, the it that wants stuff and wants it now.

The id is, essentially, unconscious. And well, actually, to combine the two bits of the talk-- where does the id get its pleasures? Freud's series of developmental stages were driven by a notion of where the sources of pleasure were in the kid's life.

And so initially, for instance, it's all oral. The fact that this all has a sexual overrun to it was, in fact, probably more a problem for Freud than useful for Freud. We'll come-- well, all right. So the kids get some-- oral stuff, that's what's giving the kid pleasure.

Well, that's sort of interesting. What's really is important in this early stage of development, though, is-- well, one of the things is figuring out who I am, you know, how much of this universe belongs to me. And is this universe a safe place? The real force behind Freud's stages of development are-- these are stages where particular issues emerge really for the first time, issues that will then turn out to be important for the rest of people's lives.

So the initial issue that comes up in this oral stage of development is safety. Am I going to be fed when I need to be fed? Am I going to be warm enough? Am I going to be taken care of? That's newborn stuff. But it's not stuff that goes away.

You know that concerns about "is the world a safe place" are the things that can occupy your mind now, too. How you understand the world, how you understand those problems, says Freud, not unreasonably, are likely to be shaped by these early experiences. If your early experience is of a safe, comfortable world, you're going to treat later challenges differently than if your early experience is "who knows if Mom's ever going to get around to feeding me again?" That's going to be a different kind of experience.

The anal stage-- all right, why is it anal? Well, it's anal, because Freud had some notion that there's certain pleasures in the elimination process and things like that. But the real issue here-- the lifelong issue that emerges-- is who's in control.

And the reason that's an anal-stage issue is because this is the point at which if you're an infant, it's not just anything goes anymore. Up to this point-- the first great crisis of control in a little child's life is very often toilet training, right? Up to this point, you could do whatever you wanted, wherever you wanted to do it.

Now, all of a sudden, somebody is saying, do it there, now. Don't play with it. Don't do any of the various-- it's disgust-- it wasn't disgusting before, you know. And in fact, when I was very little, they looked at it-- aw--
[YELLING]

Now, it's disgusting, and I've got to put it over there. What's this about? And you got to figure out, how much control do you have over yourself, and how much are you in the control of somebody else.

Here the issue is identity. Who am I? Identity-- who am I? And more specifically, what does it mean to be male or female? I'll come back to the details of that a little later on, because it gets me a little ahead of the story.

Presently, we're still back here with little Mr. Id, this unbridled collection of desires who wants everything and wants it now. At some point, the id runs up against what Freud called the reality principle, which is, you can't get what you want all the time exactly when you want it. If you haven't noticed this at this point, that's probably a little grim.

The ego, which is just the latinization of the word for "I" or the self-- the ego grows out of the collision of this Little Miss Id with reality. So the ego has to check the desires of the Id. And the ego is the embodiment of this effort to figure out how much of the universe really is me.

So the sort of thing you can imagine a kid discovering is, all right, I'm an oral-stage baby. I like sucking on stuff. There are some things that I can suck on any time I want. There's this thumb thing. Anytime I want it, it's there.

There's other things, like the bottle or the breast or whatever-- they don't-- they're different. I like them, but they're fundamentally different. They're not me.

And you've got-- so at the most basic level, you have to figure out who-- how much of the world is you. Now, this, again, ramifies through the rest of your life. If you grow up considering that you are coextensive with the universe and that you make the planets turn in their orbits, you're going to be an odd adult, right?

You've got to shrink it down from that. If you shrink down too far-- I'm not in control of anything, this didn't work out well for me, I'm not in control of anything., I'm just a little worm pushed around by force-- that's not going to be very healthy either. So the job of this emerging ego is to come up with some reasonable estimate of what your powers are and what it is that you might be in some control over.

And so now, the ego is busy there, fighting with the id. So that id is saying, I want to kill my little brother. The ego says, we can't do that. The id says, how come? The ego says, well, because Mom would whack us.

And the id says, I don't care. I still want to kill him. And the ego, at this point, starts to say things like, forget it. We're going to repress that idea. This is where you get the beginnings of ideas of repression that I was talking about last time.

All of these Freudian bits of theories attempt to interlock in some fashion. So the ego is busy taking the more unacceptable bits of the id and stuffing them away in that unconscious reservoir of the repressed. Now, you'll see that that's gotten you from an id who just was ruled by pleasures-- this really, essentially, amoral id.

You've now got the beginnings of a sense of morality here, right? It's not very sophisticated, but it's, on the one hand, this would be fun. On the other hand, we can't do it, because we might get punished.

So it's a reward and punishment. Why not rob the bank? Because you'll get arrested and thrown in jail. It's that sort of crime-and-punishment kind of a morality.

Morality gets more complicated when you reach this oedipal stage of development. To explain that, I need to say a little more about that stage-- oh, which, I can see that on the handout, I promised I would. I'll do the male version of this. If this is about identity, and particularly sexual identity, there's going to be a male story and a female story. Let's do the male story, and we'll come back to the female story.

So the basic notion that Freud came to-- the large-scale notion that makes some degree of sense is that you've got to figure out, what does it mean to be a male. That's an important thing to figure out. And it's likely that Dad or other adult males in the immediate vicinity are going to be a model for what that's going to mean.

The difficulty for Freud, or the start of the conflict in an oedipal conflict, is that the child starts very much attached to Mom. It's Mom who provides nourishment. It's Mom who gave birth to you, and so on.

How are you going to get an attachment or an identification with Dad? Well, what Freud proposed was that little kids, little boys-- let's stick with boys here. Little boys initially see themselves in competition with Dad. They like Mom. Mom is great. They want Mom. Yeah, yeah, yeah, all right.

It's called "oedipal," because Freud saw a parallel with the Greek myth of *Oedipus*, right? Oedipus, who kills his father and marries his mother. So you get this weird notion that somehow, Freud thought little boys wanted to sexually possess their mothers, and that sounds both weird and icky.

Freud was-- when Freud was-- Freud didn't do himself any help here. He was talking about infantile sexuality. Everybody heard the sexuality bit and left off the infantile bit.

Freud is not thinking in any adult sexual terms here. He's saying, look, the little kid likes Mom. Mom's a good thing. He wants Mom all to himself.

Now, it turns out that there's Dad. Dad, mysteriously, seems to have some claim on Mom, too. And so the little kid, in this infantile kind of way, figures, we're going to have it out with Dad. We're going to have a fight here, man, because there's only one Mom, and I want her. Because, you know, I've still got a lot of id going on here, and I want Mom, and--

So all right, that's stage one. That's the conflict stage. I can't remember what buzzword I used for the second stage. Oh, the second stage is capitulation. Well, there's a problem with this conflict.

OK, I'm going to have a big fight with Dad. Dad. Oh, man. Like, Dad's really big. If Dad ever figures out that I want to have a fight with him, Dad is going to kill me. Maybe he's going to castrate me. I'm not sure, but something really, really bad is going to happen here, and so I'd better deny that I was ever interested in this.

In fact, what I'm going to do is, I'm going to reject, suppress my desire for Mom, and I'm going to idealize Dad. I'm going to come to take Dad as-- in response to this perceived threat, perhaps to my very life, I'm going to-- I'm going to idealize Dad, and in some sense, incorporate Dad into me.

And that act of incorporation is the beginnings of the development of what Freud called the superego-- another latinization, this time, of a term that just means "over I," the thing that is above the self. It's not quite your conscience. It's not unrelated to your conscience.

But it, initially, for Freud, starts out as the voice of the father for a little boy. Well, let's just say, voice of parent-- and will eventually become the voice of the demands of society as a whole, telling you how to live. Not necessarily consciously, not necessarily explicitly, but telling you what the rules are.

Now, again, you might think that this whole business of a conflict with Daddy over Mommy, and the notion that you have some internalized voice of the parent that is going to be the roots of your morality, your more sophisticated adult morality-- that that all sounds a little strange. You can get a feeling for why-- where such thoughts might come from, again, if you hang around with kids.

Remember, last time, we were talking about this-- (IN HIGH-PITCHED VOICE) hugging your little brother till he turns blue. Well, look, I've now raised three sons through the oedipal stage of development. I think every last one of them, at some point in the ages of around three, four, the appropriate Freudian age, has hopped into bed some Sunday morning or something like that, into our great, big, huge king-sized bed, and asserted, this bed isn't big enough for the three of us. Why doesn't Daddy get out?

[STUDENTS LAUGH]

And mostly, what you're sitting there thinking is, no kid should ever be born to a psychologist. What's he doing? Reading the books on the side here?

And then, I'm thinking, what am I supposed to do now? You know? Am I supposed to threaten to kill him or something?

[STUDENTS LAUGH]

--develops morality? Or-- so there's that on the-- so you can really see these sorts of seemingly oedipal comments in kids of that age. And you can also sometimes hear this voice of the parent as it gets internalized, like a little kid who's been told, don't-- the cakes over here, it's for dinner. Don't mess with it. And don't go sticking your finger in the chocolate icing again. Right?

So no, no, no. You hear the kid saying-- the nice thing about little kids is that the superego will verbalize itself for you. No, no, no.

[STUDENTS LAUGH]

Now, so the idea is that the stress or the trauma of this oedipal conflict is what drives the superego down into the psyche, almost like a spike from the outside. Well, I would be remiss if I didn't say something about Freud's theory about how this works out for women. Now, I might be remiss, but you wouldn't be missing anything, in terms of-- people have all sorts of problems with this oedipal theory business.

Because for instance, what happens if you get raised in a single-parent family, with just mom? Is there any evidence that your development comes out differently? No, in fact. So you don't need dad there.

You do need to figure out what it means to be male. Oh, let me say a quick word about homosexuality. Freud regarded homosexuality, seemingly, as a variant of an outcome to this.

He did not seem to regard it as a pathology. So he's got a very interesting letter written to the mother of a gay man, who-- the mother was worried about this. And he says, basically, there's a bunch of ways this plays out.

The main line one is, in the words of the old song, you grow up to-- I want a girl just like the girl who married dear old Dad. That's the ultimate goal of this in the mainstream version. You reject your desire for Mom, you go into this latent period, you go and you do math for a while. And then, you wake up as a sexually mature adult, not looking for your mother, but looking for an appropriate object of your desires.

Freud thought that there were other possible outcomes, that they were just other possible outcomes.

Subsequent generations of American psychology declared homosexuality to be a pathology, and it was only in the '70s that American psychology returned, in a sense, to this view that it's a variant, not a problem.

So women-- how do we get to women? What's the problem with women? The problem is that you got to get-- you need the same fight, thought Freud. He's got himself sold on this oedipal thing.

And you need the same fight. But now, you need a fight between the daughter and Mom for Dad. Right? And the problem is that the initial bonding of the daughter is also to Mom. So that's no good, because you can't fight with the person you're bonded to, so he's got to get the bond to flip.

And so he came up with one of his less credible constructs, the one that even good Freudians don't really believe in, which is penis envy. What is that? Well, he figured that little girls, at some point, figured out that they had-- they did not have something that little boys had, and that this was a disaster. This was very bad.

And they figured out that Mom didn't have one either. And therefore, Mom was defective, and we ought to admire Dad instead. And then, we can go and fight with Mom. Uh.

And plus, plus, this was supposed to be-- this was traumatic, this discovery. But it wasn't so traumatic. So Freud also theorized that since it was that trauma that was creating the superego, and as a result, adult morality, that it followed that women were simply less moral than men-- a conclusion borne out any time you open the newspaper, right?

It's not one of the more successful pieces of Freud. But it is the source of my favorite, really bad experiment in this realm, which was an experiment where somebody gave a paper-and-pencil test to a group like you, one of these SAT things where you're filling in the things with the golf pencils and stuff.

And then, you hand the thing back, and the experimenters don't care a bit about the test at all. All they care about is who returned the little pencils, and more guys returned the pencils than women.

[STUDENTS LAUGH]

Anyway, it's really lame.

[STUDENTS LAUGH]

It was-- so look, the broad issue-- the broad issue of, what does it mean to be a boy or a girl, a man or a woman-- who is an appropriate-- who is going to turn out to be an appropriate object for my sexual desire and so on-- those are interesting questions. There is considerable question about whether this actual oedipal conflict-- actually, there's very little doubt that the strict form of it is not required. The single-parent family thing is one good bit of evidence against that, and the woman's story just doesn't-- it's just kind of whack.

But in any case, around this time, you do get this development of a more sophisticated morality. And in Freud's view, what you had was this poor ego here that was, on the one side, assailed by the desires of the id that wanted to do all sorts of unspeakable and stupid things that you couldn't do in the face of reality. And then, there's the demands on the other side of the superego that doesn't want you to-- mostly, that doesn't want you to do-- it does want you to do stuff, too, but anyway, it's got its own demands.

And the ego has to somehow thread a path through here. Now, the superego-- how does the superego let you know what you're supposed to do? The superego has-- well, it says on the handout, does it? Where did I put it on the handout? Oh, no, I put a blank. Look at that.

The superego has a weapon that lets you know when you've done what it does not approve of. To figure out what that weapon is, you can invoke your own introspection. What you need to do is imagine some activity that your parents would disapprove of.

It can be society as a whole, if you like, but parents will do. So think of something that your parents would deeply disapprove of if you phoned up and said, guess what I did? And ask yourself, how would you feel the next day?

AUDIENCE: Guilty.

JEREMY WOLFE: Thank-- guilty? Thank you. I don't know. Guilt is the weapon of the superego in this view. So when you feel guilty, a good Freudian would say, you're feeling guilty because you've done something that transgressed the boundaries set by the superego. Now, look, I went out, and I committed murder, and I feel really bad about that.

Yeah, all right. That's not terribly interesting. The more interesting cases were patients who said, I feel guilty. I don't really know why. I just feel this sense of guilt.

And a Freudian would say, well, look, this isn't all conscious stuff. You've apparently transgressed some boundaries that you don't quite recognize yourself consciously, but it's there, and we need to figure out-- if you want to get over this guilt, we need to figure out what that problem is. Now, how many people here enjoy feeling guilty?

All right. So it follows that the ego, which is not eager to sit around feeling guilty, is going to have some defense against that. So introspection ought to work here, too. Let's go back to that, whatever it was that you were going to do, that would be really, really wrong.

Now, let's suppose you haven't done it yet, but you're going to do it. It's right over there, and you can just go and do it. How will you feel?

AUDIENCE: Anxious.

JEREMY WOLFE: Anxious. I heard an anxious over there somewhere. Thank you for the "anxious," wherever "anxious" is. Anxiety is considered to be the defense mechanism for-- of the ego against the predations of the superego.

So when you feel anxious in this context, the answer is, well, you're pushing up against something that the superego doesn't want you to do. There are-- now, let's go back to the case where I feel anxious but I don't know why. Classic Freudian view would have been, there's some-- your superego-- that you're getting close to its rules, and it's not happy with you.

Any reasonable, more modern view would include the possibility that you are just having an anxiety attack that we might consider to be more biological than psychological, that there are chunks of the brain that, if they are overactive, make you-- the experience is being anxious. If they are overactive for, essentially, neurochemical reasons, you may feel a disembodied anxiety that's got nothing to do with whether or not you're about to do something that Mother doesn't approve of, but has everything to do with the balance of your chemicals.

The current position in the pendulum that swings back and forth on how to handle, essentially, psychiatric issues would be to treat freefloating anxiety as, essentially, a biological problem that we might want to medicate, and would tend to undervalue the possibility that you're feeling anxious for underlying psychological, rather than for underlying neurochemical reasons. And of course, you can feel anxious for things that don't have anything particular to do with the superego or the imbalance of your neurotransmitters.

If I stand on the lectern on one foot, I might feel a certain amount of anxiety for this, because there's a straightforward threat to my personal safety. So there are multiple routes into anxiety, but within this context, anxiety is the warning sign that you are embarking on a course that Mother would not approve of, or maybe Dad, or maybe the broader society as a whole.

So the result here for Freud is that with this collection of psychological structures-- again, psychological structures-- nobody thinks you're going to go into an MRI machine and find the locus of the superego. But the result of this is that we don't end up raping and pillaging our way across the landscape. We sublimate our aggressive urges into things like sports or work.

We sublimate-- the unbridled sexual desires of the id get redirected into courtship or into literature or into some other appropriate kind of realm. And from this, Freud ends up generalizing a theory of civilization as a whole. He wrote a very interesting book late in his life, called *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Why "its discontents"?

Freud believed that in order to be civilized, you were going to have to fight against the desires of your id. Your id was going to be unhappy with you. And you were going to have to fight against the strictures of the superego, which were going to be too strict for any normal person to hold on to. You were necessarily going to be repressed, dissatisfied, and so on.

That was the price you paid for being civilized. Or one way to think about this-- one line from the book is that the first man to hurl a spear-- sorry, to hurl an insult, rather than a spear, is the founder of civilization. The first man who can redirect that id-like desire into something that's consistent with maintaining a civilized world-- that's where you start to get the possibility of civilization.

Now, I recommend the book to you, in part because some of it is extremely entertaining, for all the wrong reasons. Not all of Freud's-- as you may have gathered by now, not all of Freud's detailed ideas really have stood the test of time. So I cannot resist the urge to give you Freud's account of the domestication of fire, which-- so here's the problem, as Freud saw it.

You know, fire happens out in the world. What did primitive man do when he saw fire? Says Freud.

AUDIENCE: Burned himself?

JEREMY WOLFE: Burned himself. Well, that would be one possibility, yes. So ah, OK, well, we can follow with this line of, if you weren't going to burn yourself, what might you want to do to that fire?

AUDIENCE: Put it out.

JEREMY WOLFE: Put it out. If you're a guy, how are you going to put it out?

[STUDENTS TALKING]

AUDIENCE: Smack it.

JEREMY WOLFE: Smack it? No, that's if you're a dumb guy. No, Freud proposed that you would urinate on it, and that this was an essentially sexual act. Don't ask me why. But the first man to renounce that desire, that apparently id-like desire to go and urinate on fire-- he could bring the fire home.

And that, again, would be a building block of civilization. Not only that, said Freud, this explains why in many cultures, women are the keeper of the hearth. Why is that? Well, it's a great deal more difficult, if you're a woman, to urinate on the fire. It's just not going to work out well for you.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

No, you don't have to believe that. But if-- it's on page 37, apparently, of my copy of *Civilization and Its Discontents*. But the broader thought-- I mean, the book is a beautiful example of exactly why I think it's still worth teaching Freud. There's a lot of wacko stuff in there about peeing on the fire.

But the broader, large-scale thought that repression of infantile urges is a price that we pay for civilization is, it seems to me, a worthwhile thought to rattle around, and that as you become more civilized, in a sense, you end up becoming more repressed-- that the id's going to sit there trying to escape, and you build more and more walls around it, and you live with more anxiety and more guilt as the price for being, in some sense, more civilized.

Now, that's sort of a dark view. It's interesting that this dark view crops up. Later in his life, he had to flee Austria from the Nazis. He was a sick-- a sick and dying man when he wrote *Civilization and Its Discontents*. It's a rather dark view of civilization.

You might wonder, if this is-- let's suppose this is all true, in some fashion. Well, as it says on the handout, how are you going to talk to the children about this? If these are important issues and your kid is hopping into bed with you and saying, you know, Daddy, get out of bed, I want Mommy, and stuff like that, how do you talk to the-- I'll tell you how you don't talk to your kids.

You don't say, I recognize that at this stage in your life, that it is-- that you are thinking that you're in conflict with me, but what you need to realize is that I'm much bigger than you, and if you pursue this much further, see the scissors? You know, you're in very big trouble here.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

That is not a conversation you want to have with a four-year-old kid. Even if you're a psychologist, it's just not a good idea. But you could imagine that these issues, which are not explicitly understood by parents or children-- but these issues about, is the world safe, who runs the show, what am I-- these sort of issues are issues that you're going to want to talk about.

And if there's this sort of psychosexual development thing running underneath it, those are the issues-- you're going to want to talk about it in those terms. Bruno Bettelheim, following up on ideas in Freud's own writings, wrote a very interesting book called, *The Uses of Enchantment*, in which he argued that it is-- that among other things, fairy tales-- or more precisely, folk tales-- serve the role of a hidden language, or a way to talk it to your children in hidden language about these issues.

"Fairy tales" is an English term. It's a little misleading, because fairy tales don't necessarily have fairies in them, but folk tales is the more accurate term. So something like the *Tales of the Brothers Grimm*-- the brothers did not write those stories. They collected them. They were early-19th-century anthropologists wandering around northern Germany, getting Grandma to tell them stories.

And a folk tale is a story that's not explicitly written down for literary purposes. It's a story that has grown up organically, from parents telling children and children saying, oh, tell me the one about the witch and with the candy house and stuff like that. And these stories, the good ones, get passed on. And Bettelheim says the good ones get passed on because they do this kind of work. They allow you to talk about these kinds of issues.

I see that I said, what are the characteristics of fairy tales, so I'd better say a word about that. Characters and fairy tales are typically good or bad. They're not-- you don't get-- in the woods, there was a witch. She wasn't really a horrible person. She was kind of misunderstood, and she'd been abused as a child.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

No, she's a bad witch. She's not-- you know, and there was a boy, very schematic character. Oh, that's the second point, actually-- very schematic characters, often with names like "the boy," "the girl," or just a simple descriptor, like Snow White, which is just telling you something about how she looks. And you know, she's good, right? It's not that she's got issues or something. She's good.

And they're figures that a kid could identify with, typically. This is in contrast, for instance, to myth. You know, Oedipus is not a folktale, in this sense. You don't, at age four, say, let me tell you about this cool story where this guy goes off and kills his dad, and then marries his mom, and he blinds himself in the end. It's really neat.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

But you say, ooh, that's really gross. But ask yourself-- and we're going to do *Hansel and Gretel* in a minute here. How many people know the story of *Hansel and Gretel*? Right? I mean, think about *Hansel and Gretel* in those terms.

Or think about the headlines-- "Poverty parents ditch kids in wood." You know, "Girl, 5, cooks old lady in oven." I mean, this stuff is just as gruesome in its own way as, you know, King of Thebes finds out he's married to mom, blinds himself, and wanders off into three more plays by *Sophocles*.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

It's not immediately obvious that it's just grossness that somehow differentiates myth and folktale. But the characters are typically something that a kid could identify with. They have optimistic endings that clearly distinguishes you from Greek tragedy or something like that.

At the end of a classic fairy tale, good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people, which is get killed. Good little girls and boys go home and live happily ever after and stuff like that. But at the same time, while they're optimistic in their ending, they do not typically have overt morals on them like Aesop's Fables or something like that.

You don't get fairy tales that say, they came home after having cooked the witch, and they said, we'll never go into the woods again or eat any candy ever, ever, ever. It's, good things happen to good people, bad things happen to bad people, and-- no overt punchline at the end. And important point is that even if Bettelheim is correct, that these are somehow talking in this coded Freudian language, parents don't know the language, and kids don't know the language, or don't know the-- they're doing this all, again, implicitly, rather than explicitly.

And nobody, except somebody who took too many notes in Intro Psych, says, let's see, the kid's three, and he was making these cracks about the bed and Dad and stuff like that. Let's see, I need an oedipal fairy tale. *Jack and the Beanstalk*-- that'll work tonight. [CHUCKLES]

But the notion is that the kid will be requesting stories that address issues that he wants to hear about, and the parents may find themselves choosing stories to read or to tell that serve the issues that are arising in their minds at the time. Now, a lot of this has been somewhat diluted in our era, because we tend to read fairy tales and/or watch them on videos where they have been turned into literary constructs in ways that they weren't in northern Germany in the 19th century or something like that. So we'll talk a little later about some of the ways that Disney has modified some of the great fairy tales.

They're wonderful things, but Bettelheim is very mad about the ones where the revisions that make nice at the end-- you know, Cinderella stories where you do something nice for the stepdaughters-- you're not supposed to-- stepsisters. You're not supposed to do anything nice for the stepsisters. They're supposed to get their eyes pecked out by crows. Because they're bad, and bad stuff happens to bad people. Cinderella isn't supposed to arrange for them to marry some duke or something like that, and it makes Bettelheim very agitated.

All right, let's talk fairy tales here. So *Hansel and Gretel*-- *Hansel and Gretel* is, in this way of thinking about things, an oral-stage fairy tale. Oh, let me say something about that. Oral stage-- that's like year one, and you're sitting there saying, I like *Hansel and Gretel*. Does that mean, like, I never got out of the oral stage?

No. Remember, the idea here is that the issues that arise in the oral stage-- about, is the world a safe place, for instance-- are issues that will persist for the rest of your life. So you're a seven-year-old kid, in his view or something, having a certain amount of concern about whether the world is safe, and if you walk down the street to school, you're going to get hit by a car or something like that. And maybe *Hansel and Gretel* would appeal on those terms.

It's not-- oh, another example would be *Beauty and the Beast*-- a female oedipal story, we will see, when I get-- if and when I get to it. You're saying, I'm a guy. I'm a guy. I like *Beauty and the Beast*. Is this a problem?

No. Now, part of this is not only do you have to figure out what it means to be a guy, you also have to figure out what it means to be a woman. You don't happen to be a woman, but it would be really interesting to understand what it might mean. And so again, you might be interested in that particular story, not because some strange path is going on and blah, blah-- no, it's an interesting question.

All right, *Jack and the bean*-- no, not *Jack and the Beanstalk*-- *Hansel and Gretel*. So what's the issue? Wait, wait, let's step back. What's the family situation here? Who have we got as the characters in *Hansel and Gretel*? Well, there's Hansel and Gretel. Who else do we have?

[STUDENTS TALKING]

Father and?

AUDIENCE: The mother.

JEREMY WOLFE: The mother.

AUDIENCE: The stepmother.

JEREMY WOLFE: The stepmother. Is she a good stepmother?

AUDIENCE: Bad.

JEREMY WOLFE: No, a bad stepmother. There are an awful lot of bad stepmothers in fairy story-- fair tales. Now, that's a little mysterious. There are a couple of ways to understand this.

One of them is to say that in the days when childbirth was a much riskier proposition, many more people had stepmothers, because Mom had died in childbirth, as indeed happens in any number of fairy stories. And in fact, you can come up with an evolutionary psych argument that says that the stepmother then systematically favors her own genetic children over the stepchildren. But that's not the Freudian account here.

The Freudian account is, look, the initial mother, who you encounter when you're a baby, is a really good mommy. She does everything for you, and she says, yes, all the time. You know, she just-- you cry, she jumps. It's great.

Eventually, Mom gets tired of this, and Mom starts saying no, and Mom starts saying things like it's time to go poop in the bucket and not in your pants, and all this other stuff. And that, in this view, is the transition between good mommy and bad mommy. And there are so many fairy tales where you get born to a good mommy, and then the bad mommy shows up, way outside of the range of what would be probable in the population-- that you can imagine that it's a stand-in for something else, maybe for a stand-in that you're coming out of this oral stage of development in this story.

All right, so what's the problem that's faced by our lovely little family unit ? What's the issue here?

AUDIENCE: Poor?

JEREMY WOLFE: Poor. We're out of money. So what's the specific result of being out of money?

[STUDENTS TALKING]

A few hands would be handy, rather than the general-purpose muttering. No, we've scared them off. What have we run out of here? We've run out of food. We don't have any food.

So the natural thing to do when you've run out of food is to what?

AUDIENCE: Gather some.

JEREMY WOLFE: Gather some. Well, that didn't work apparently, or at least that was a really boring story. Once upon a time, there was a mother, a father, and a little boy and girl, and they got hungry, and they went out into a field, and they gathered mushrooms.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

Unfortunately, they were poisonous, and they all died.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

So that was one of those stories that didn't get repeated, you know. (IN HIGH-PITCHED VOICE) Tell me the story about the poison-- no. So what happens in *Hansel and Gretel*?

You get rid of the kids. You stick the kids out in the woods. But Hansel-- here's the plan. Mom and Dad are busy discussing this at night, and Mom-- Hansel hears about it. He does what? No, he doesn't run away. That's the Russian version.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

He kills the parents-- no. Wait a second, guys. I thought you said you knew this story. Let's get this straight. He goes out into the garden. He collects a bunch of white stones. He leaves the white stones behind as a trail.

And--

AUDIENCE: It's bread.

AUDIENCE: Bread crumbs.

JEREMY WOLFE:No. No, that's the second time. You guys are all going to flunk the final, guys. It's very bad.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

First time, it's white rocks. And when the moon rises, so you can see the white rocks, they come back. So you've got an oral-stage problem. There ain't no food.

And the initial crisis, where the kids get left in the woods, is met with a non-solution. You just return back to the same situation. Second time, same thing-- they get abandoned out in the woods. But this time, nasty old stepmom's been cagier about it and locked Hansel in, and all he's got is his bread.

And so now, he tries what you can think of as an oral-stage solution to an oral problem. He leaves this collection of breadcrumbs behind. Does an oral solution solve this problem? Well, no, what happens to the breadcrumbs?

AUDIENCE: The birds eat them.

JEREMY WOLFE:The birds eat the breadcrumbs, so there's no breadcrumbs. And they wander around, and they fall asleep in the woods. And there's a beautiful chorus in the Engelbert Humperdinck opera, which you should all hear sometime-- gorgeous opera. And Engelbert Humperdinck really was his name. Very sad.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

But the opera is lovely. Anyway, so the next day, they wake up. They're hopelessly lost. They wander around. They're hungry. They're not terribly happy. And they find?

AUDIENCE: Gingerbread.

JEREMY WOLFE:The house, right? The house, made of gingerbread and candy and stuff like that. And so like all good little kids, what they do is engage in a little petty vandalism. They knock out-- Gretel eats a window, and Hansel eats a hunk of a roof.

And then, they hear this voice saying, "nibbling, nibbling, like a mouse, who's that nibbling at my house?" And they respond, "the wind, the wind doth blow, from the heavens to the Earth below," which makes no sense.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

But anyway, so out comes the--?

AUDIENCE: Witch.

JEREMY WOLFE:How do you know she's a witch?

[STUDENTS TALKING]

Now, the way you know she's a witch, it says, is because her eyes glow red. This is a tipoff, in case-- this is practical advice for you.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

If you're vandalizing somebody's house and the owner comes out and her eyes are glowing red, worry about it. But this means that witches don't see very well, which turns out to be handy. They have keen senses of smell, we're told.

Anyway, this witch-- now, the interesting thing about these fairy tales is that you have a problem at home, and then you are thrust out into-- well, in the North German versions that the Grimm fairy tales are-- into the woods to solve it. Somebody will have to tell me what you do if you're reading, I don't know, Saudi Arabian fairy tales-- whether you get thrust out into the dunes or something like that.

But the important thing is, you go out away from-- you don't solve your problem where it is in these stories, typically. You go out and away. And what you find out there, in story after story, is a caricature, an extreme version of the problem at home. So here we've got an oral problem-- there isn't enough food.

Or perhaps, if we're thinking in infantile terms, where does the food come from if you're an infant? Well, it comes from Mom. So not enough food means you've kind of eaten all that you can eat off of Mom.

And you might worry, what's going to happen if Mom wants this back? Well, what you find in the woods is this orality gone nuts. Because what this witch does is eats little kids. That's her stock in trade. And she's going to eat Hansel, but it turns out he's too skinny for her. So there's this fattening-up period, and da-da-da, all right.

So eventually, it's cooking day, and the witch says to Gretel, climb into the oven. See if it's warm. Because we're baking bread, ha-ha. Climb into the oven.

And Gretel, who's on to this, says-- (IN HIGH-PITCHED VOICE) I don't think I can do that. Can you show me how? And the witch says something like, you silly goose! Anybody can do that!

And she climbs up to the oven, and Gretel slams the door on her, and she perishes horribly, making loud screams-- which-- not much better than blinding yourself and things like that, but it's deeply satisfying in this story. But now, you've done something-- so now, they've killed off this symbol of orality. And there are two important things that happen thereafter.

First of all, what they now discover is that the house is full of gold and jewels. And they stuff their-- a little more looting going on here-- but they stuff their pockets, not with candy, not with more oral-solution kind of stuff, but now with something that allows them to go home, and have moved to a different stage-- a stage where, in principle, they can be contributors, not just consumers. Right?

This isn't supposed to be an accurate model of what happens in a one-year-old kid moving out of the oral stage. Oral-stage kid doesn't suddenly say, at the end of the year, OK, look, like, I'm weaned, and now, I'm going to go do chores. You've got to understand this in a little more symbolic way.

But the notion that the oral-- rather than an oral solution, we've got a different kind of solution-- the other thing that's very emblematic here is, what do the children find when they get home? Anybody remember?

AUDIENCE: The stepmother's dead.

JEREMY WOLFE: The stepmother is dead. Presumably, the stepmother is dead at the instant that the witch is killed, because they're, in a sense, one and the same character. Right? They are the problem. They are the emblem of this oral-stage problem. It gets killed off, and everybody's good.

Well, I think before the break, what-- I'm going to skip the anal stage for the present. I promise to come back with an anal-stage fairy tale, but what I'm going to do before the break is, I'm going to skip to-- and there are lots of oedipal-stage fairy tales. And I'm going to use *Jack and the Beanstalk* as an example of an early-oedipal-stage fairy tale.

Jack and the Beanstalk-- all right, let's do *Jack and the Beanstalk* quickly. *Jack and the Beanstalk*-- what's the crisis at the beginning? What's Jack sent off to do?

AUDIENCE: Sell the cow.

JEREMY WOLFE: Sell the cow. Why are you selling the cow?

AUDIENCE: The milk went away.

JEREMY WOLFE: It's not giving milk anymore. If you want a nice clear image that you're out of the oral stage, the cow having run dry on you is pretty good. Right? So Jack is supposed to go off. He's supposed to do the *Hansel and Gretel* thing, right? He's supposed to go from the dried-up-cow thing, and get some money, so we can go do the food thing the other way. But what's he do? He trades it for?

AUDIENCE: Magic beans.

JEREMY WOLFE: Magic beans. Yeah, all right. He comes home. Is Mom happy about this?

AUDIENCE: No.

JEREMY WOLFE: No. So-- oh, what happens to Jack? He gets sent to bed without any supper-- another end-of-oral-stage kind of image. And Mom does what with the beans?

AUDIENCE: Throws them out--

JEREMY WOLFE: Throws them out the window, or sows his wild oats or something like that. In any case, something grows really big at night in this story. Right? And you don't have to be a vastly Freudian imagination to think that this looks a little phallic here, maybe. Anyway, you wake up in the morning, and there's this giant beanstalk.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

Climbs up the beanstalk. You climb up the beanstalk. What do you find at the top of the beanstalk?

AUDIENCE: Castle.

JEREMY WOLFE: You find another-- just like in *Hansel and Gretel*, you find a cartoon version of what was at home. You find-- so you find the castle, which is just the house. And who lives there?

AUDIENCE: The giant.

JEREMY WOLFE: Well, who does he find when he gets there first?

AUDIENCE: The giant's wife.

JEREMY WOLFE: The giant's wife, or the ogre is his wife, who's the stand-in for mom. Is she bad? No, she's really very nice. They have a very nice relationship. They're playing all day.

The problem is-- "fee fi fo fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread," otherwise known as, Dad has come home.

This is a sort of-- one of the things that's interesting here is that this models a classic nuclear family with mom-- a stay-at-home mom that-- and you can imagine, in the context of this oedipal conflict-- so here's the son. All day long, he gets to play with Mom. You know, Mom's cool. Mom's great.

And then, this ogre-- big dad-- comes home, and he wants Mom, and he wants dinner, and he wants to grind up little kids and stuff like that, which is a little strange. But it is an image of the situation that a young child might find himself in.

Now, you might wonder whether in a few more generations, our fairy tales will have to change in response to the-- in my family, both of us were out of the house, working. I mean, so the nice-giantess-at-home model isn't going to quite work. You wonder whether or not, in a few days, a few years, a few generations or something, Jack will be there with the nice daycare provider or something like that, and the mom and dad giants will come home at the end of the day with, "fee fi fo fum, let's microwave the little bum" or something like that.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

But in this version-- in this version, you got Dad. He comes home-- so the dad's stand-in. And so what does Jack do? Well, first of all, the mother hides him in the oven, which is a womb-like symbol, which is rather nice.

But he goes off and steals stuff from Dad, from the giant. He spends all of his time ripping Dad off here, and basically, being in conflict with Dad. Eventually, he tries to steal Dad's golden harp, which is bad, because the thing makes a racket.

He got the goose out of there without the problem. Goose that lays the golden eggs-- good thing to steal. Kept the goose quiet, but the harp made it-- anyway, the giant catches on to this. And what's he do? What's Jack do?
[MUMBLING] Didn't understand a word of that. Where's Jack go?

AUDIENCE: Back.

JEREMY WOLFE: Back down the beanstalk. What's he do with the beanstalk? He chops it down. And either-- depends on the-- either Dad crashes, or the giant crashes or not.

But in any case, if this was a full-blast oedipal story, you'd be going, ba-da-da, and get to the point where you go off and, for instance, marry the princess or something like that. This is a partway oedipal-- not all the way through the story-- thing.

Yet get that beanstalk, and you get rid of it. Either it's sort of a reversion back, or it's going into a latent period. None of this stuff that grows in the night-- nothing, man. We're done with that for the time being.

Nothing good happens here. Large, big guys chase me around when I do anything of that-- and forget it. So it's a story that doesn't get all the way through to the end of this whole psychosexual story that Freud's weaving.

So let's see here. Classic-- all right. Well, I've already given you a hint that classic male oedipal stories are those stories where you do end up marrying the princess. I'll say a bit more about that in a minute. But let's take a short break, because otherwise, I'll never get to the end of this.

[SIDE CONVERSATIONS]

AUDIENCE: For the final, do you think you have some links I could use because I really don't know too many stories?

JEREMY WOLFE: Oh, don't worry. No answer on the final will require you to know the details of the story. But you should-- and I hope I'm telling enough of the story, that you can get the feeling for how it maps back and forth to the bits of Freud. But if you happen to be fond of the fairy tale literature, the Bettelheim book is a lot of fun to read.

I keep looking for-- I mean, it's now-- how old is it? God, it's 25 years old? I read that sucker when it came out the first time. Anyway, I keep looking for new stuff to read on it, and there's nothing as good. It's fun to read.

In the full-blast-- in the full-blast male-version oedipal fairy tales, there are endless ones of these. And they are of the form. They're very typically of the form.

Now, the lead character is typically somewhat older, often described as a prince, rather now than as a boy. And rather than being, like, abandoned in the woods, he is now thrust out of doors by his father for some crime or other. He has to go out into the world.

He's at home in this oedipal conflict. They reach the crisis in the conflict, and Dad literally says, I'm going to kill you. The king says, I'm going to kill you or something, and he's got to go out into the world. And he goes out in the world and has adventures.

What he does out in the world in these stories is very typically to kill a stand-in for the father. In Greek tragedy, you may kill your father. In a fairy tale, you kill the ogre, the dragon, the giant, something that stands in for the father.

And the reason you're doing this is because the ogre, the giant, or the dragon has, in his possession, what?

AUDIENCE: A princess.

JEREMY WOLFE: A princess. She's almost always a princess who thinks that the prince is really quite nice and all that-- and not mother. You don't go out and rescue your mother from the dragon. It just doesn't happen. Right?

What you're going to go out in one of these stories and do is find an appropriate mate, not the inappropriate oedipal-conflict-stage mate. You're going to go out and find the princess, kill the dragon. You're going to then bring her home, and everything's going to be good.

And in fact, at this point, typically, in one of these stories, the king will not die but will retire. And Prince Charles and England's been waiting for this for years. But it's never worked out for him. But the prince-- you come home with the right princess, and the king retires, and you get to rule the roost. That's getting through all the way to the end of the story.

Now, female oedipal stories are different in interesting ways, because of the difference in the traditional family structure, right? If, in the male structure, you've got the giant in *Jack and the Beanstalk*, who comes in only intermittently, because the primary caregiver is the mother-- the female's got the conflict with the primary caregiver. So you have, in these stories, the girls who are captives of nasty older women in some fashion or other.

So let's look, for instance, at *Snow White*. Snow White-- another one of these names where the name is just a generic term, right? She's white as snow and got hair as black as coal or something. I don't remember.

Anyway, lovely mother, lovely mother dies. The husband, the king, remarries-- remarries another lovely woman but a very jealous one. The jealous stepmother has what cool device?

AUDIENCE: The mirror.

JEREMY WOLFE: The mirror, made famous most recently in *Shrek* endlessly. But the cool thing about the mirror in *Snow White* is it speaks, not literally, but figuratively with the voice of the little girl. Initially, when the stepmother asks, mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of us all, the mirror says, you, it's you. The voice of the little girl's saying, look, I idealize you. You're my mother. You're the greatest thing since sliced bread.

A little later-- mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of us all-- well, look, Queenie, you look pretty good for a woman of your age, but have you seen Snow White? You know, she is a blossoming young woman here. And anyway, this drives the nasty old stepmother nuts. And in the best tradition of oedipal stories, she decides to do what with Snow White?

AUDIENCE: Kill--

JEREMY WOLFE: Kill her. And oh, another characteristic of female oedipal stories is that the dad tends to either be absent or useless. The king does nothing here. The other dad stand-in, who's the huntsman, who the queen gives Snow White to have her killed-- the huntsman fails both the queen and Snow White.

Disney's actually quite close to the original story in this one. The huntsman takes her out into the woods, doesn't have the heart to kill her, but also doesn't have the guts to save her, so throws-- loses her out in the woods, basically. He goes off and kills what?

AUDIENCE: A deer.

JEREMY WOLFE: A deer. Does what?

AUDIENCE: Cuts out its heart.

JEREMY WOLFE:Cuts out his heart, its heart, brings it home. The queen does what? She eats it.

[STUDENTS GROANING]

Nice woman. Anyway, so she goes off into the-- she goes off into the woods. And what does she find out in the woods? (SINGING) Hi, ho, hi ho-- (SPEAKING) She finds a lovely little encapsulated anal-stage fairy tale, is what she finds.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

She finds-- look, if you ask-- the women will have some intuition about this. If you told your mother, Mom, I found this really great housing arrangement at MIT, I'm going to go and live with seven hairy guys--

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

Would Mom be thrilled? No. She would not be. If, however, they were the dwarfs from *Snow White*-- even though the ones in Grimm aren't Sleepy and Dopey and Whippy and Whoppy and whatever they are in Disney-- you wouldn't worry about it, because these guys are-- they're little asexual guys. There is no sense of threat here at all.

And what do they like to do? They like to dig stuff out of the dirt, put stuff back in the dirt, dig stuff out of the dirt, put stuff back-- and they're devoted to Snow White. They think she's great. But they're a little anal-stage fairy tale tucked in there.

And so the problem is that the mirror rats out Snow White, right? You know, mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of us all? Yeah, yeah, Queen, you look great. Guess who's blossoming down in the woods with a bunch of little hairy asexual guys?

So she disguises herself. The queen disguises herself and goes off in an effort to kill Snow White. She tries three different times, and they are interestingly emblematic of an effort to keep a girl from turning into a woman.

The clearest one of these is the corset that she sells. She goes as a peddler woman and sells Snow White a corset that restricts her, so squeezes her body back into a little girl's body, so hard that she can't breathe, and falls over dead-- and/or semi-dead. And always, at the last minute-- hi, ho, hi, ho, and the dwarves come back. And she's dim.

After the-- it's one of these "fool me once, shame on me" things. But three times, she goes and falls for the old-lady thing. And the last time, it's with this Adam and Eve kind of apple, right? She eats the apple. The dwarves come home, and she's dead, and they can't do anything about it.

Now, what would the natural thing be to do under those circumstances? Bury her, right? Or something. She's dead. What do they do? They put her in a glass coffin.

They can't-- it says they can't bear to bury her. They put her in a glass coffin and put her in a clearing in the woods, which--

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

And it says in the story that she continues to grow into a beautiful young woman, which is a lovely image of a latency stage, right? Nothing's happening, but she's turning into a sexually mature woman, is what's going on here. You would think that the dwarves might catch on, right? There's something weird here, guys.

That normally, the dead body thing, it doesn't work like this. But anyway, the dwarves don't-- she's getting beautiful. And through the woods comes the?

AUDIENCE: Prince.

JEREMY WOLFE: Prince. The prince does what?

AUDIENCE: Kiss her?

JEREMY WOLFE: Nah, the prince doesn't kiss her. None of that stuff. What the prince does-- I can't remember if he does this in the Disney version. But in the traditional version, the prince orders the dwarves to bring the coffin to his castle.

What is he thinking? This would be a really cool coffee table? I mean, it's--

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

It's very weird stuff. But what happens is, the dwarves, who have been extremely careful all along-- the dwarves trip. The castle-- the coffin shatters, and the apple pops out of her throat, and she's alive. She's fine.

This is a story that doesn't quite get all the way through to adult sexuality, in the sense that the story ends without her saying that she loves the prince or anything like that. It says, he was nice, and so she went with him. It doesn't quite get you all the way through.

The classic stories that get you all the way through to the end of the story are the so-called-- on the female side-- are the so-called animal groom stories. I don't have time to do *Little Red Riding Hood*, really. But *Little Red Riding Hood* is a story where all men are beasts, and they stay beasts.

The classic versions of female oedipal stories that get you all the way through to the end of the story are the ones where the beast is redeemed by the love of a good woman. One class of these is, kiss the frog, and it turns into a prince. But let's do *Beauty and the Beast*.

Now, *Beauty and the Beast*, in the Disney version, is a wonderful movie about female empowerment or something like that. But it's a long, long way from the original folktale version of it, unlike the Disney's *Snow White*. So let me tell you a little more about the version that is in Grimms' fairy tales, if you aren't familiar with it.

So in Grimms' fairy tales or in the classic *Beauty and the Beast* story, there's no-- for starters, there's no reason why the beast is a beast. He's been-- in these stories, typically-- the beast in the Disney version is a beast because he's got no love, and he was nasty to the-- whatever she was who showed up at the door, and stuff like that. None of that in the traditional versions. He's a beast, because some older woman said, you're a beast, in the "all men are beasts" school of beasthood.

And so when we start out with *Beauty and the Beast*, Beauty is at home with her two sisters. No mom on site at all in this one, but there's dad, and dad's going off on a trip. Not because he's got some wacko cool invention. He's just going on a trip.

And he says, what do you want me to bring back? And one greedy old sister says, oh, bring me a Mercedes. And the other one says, bring me a fur coat. And Beauty, who's a bit of a sap says-- (IN HIGH-PITCHED VOICE) oh, just bring me one rose.

So anyway, he does well on the trip, and he gets the Mercedes, and he gets the fur coat, and he forgets the rose. Right? So he's coming home, and he passes this ruinous castle, and there's a rose bush, of course. And he says, nobody's going to miss one rose, right?

So he goes and picks the rose. So, bad move, because out comes-- [GROWLS] And I'm going to pick my rose. Now, I'm going to kill you, which seems a little disproportionate. But he's a beast, after all.

And so the daddy explains way more than he should be under the circumstances. Oh, I'm just picking one for my daughter, who lives over there. And the beast says, OK, fine, I won't kill you. Send me the daughter. Dad says OK.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

Now, to give Dad-- there's two ways of looking at this. One of them is that Dads very traditionally, in animal groom stories, are the person who, in a sense, walks the daughter down the aisle here. The other way of thinking about this more charitably about Dad is that Dad's thinking, I'm just getting out of here, man. I'm not going to send my daughter back.

But he goes home. He tells the story. And very much like in the Disney version, Beauty says, hey, you gave your word. I got to go. And so she goes off to live with the beast.

Now, the beast-- well, he's a beast. But he's kind of a gentleman. He's not really a bad beast, as these things go. They live a perfectly reasonable life.

They're in this grungy castle. Every night, after dinner, he says, will you kiss me? And she says, oh, yuck, you're a beast. And he doesn't press the issue, right?

And they just go on like this for a long, long time. And eventually, she gets a postcard or something. Oh, no, I guess she gets a wedding invitation. She gets an invitation that says, your sister's getting married. Why don't you come home to the wedding?

And the beast is reluctant to let her go, but says, you can go, as long as you come back within a month, or I'll die. So she goes home. And a big, long party-- I guess because she forgets all about it.

And in various versions-- the magic mirror, in some versions of it. In any case, on the 31st day, she either looks in the mirror or realizes in a dream or something, that the beast is dying. The castle is in ruins. The beast is dying.

And she wishes herself back there. She's magically transported back there. Nobody gets to get killed on the roof in the rain or anything like that.

She realizes that she does love this beast and kisses him. And kaboom. Now, he has been redeemed by the love of a good woman, and he's no longer a beast, and you've gotten through all the way to the end of the story.

So *Little Red Riding Hood*-- there's no sense that she's going to go marry the beast. In *Little Red Riding Hood*, what you've got is the situation where Little Red Riding Hood says, when confronted by the beast on the road-- in effect, she says, I'm much too young for you. I'm an inappropriate sexual object. Why don't you go see Grandma? She's a much more experienced woman.

[STUDENTS LAUGHING]

And you go read your *Little Red Riding Hood* again. *Little Red Riding Hood* gives way too much-- if you go and meet a stranger, a bad, scary stranger, and he asks a bunch of questions, you're not supposed to say, I live-- or Grandma-- I'm going to Grandma, she lives at 400 Shadybrook Lane, and I think she leaves the back door unlocked.

That's more or less what Red Riding Hood does. And then, so-- what the wolf does is it goes there and gobbles up Grandma, gets into bed, and then gobbles up Little Red Riding Hood, who is later delivered by cesarean section, more or less, and describes the whole experience as yucky. Not scary or anything. It was just all sort of gross.

And oh, and when the wolf is captured by the huntsman, Daddy-- the wolf is described as, you old sinner. You know, what's that about? Anyway, *Little Red Riding Hood* ends with Little Red Riding Hood saying, I will never go off the straight and narrow again.

Because the wolf's been saying, go smell the flowers, go off the track, and stuff like that. So that's a story where you don't get through the whole thing. If you wanted to write a *Little Red Riding Hood* story, you want to morph it into a full-blast story, I suppose it'd be a little crass if Little Red Riding Hood had to go and marry the guy who killed Grandma. That's a little gross.

But she'd end up kissing the wolf at the end, and the wolf would turn into something nice. There's a great MIT fairy tale, "The Tool and Die" fairy tale, but you'll have to ask me about it some other time.