



The Perversions of Children's Literature

—Nat Hurley

I read children's literature as a queer theorist and am attached to it in much the same way that Judith Butler reads and describes her attachment to the term "lesbian." In "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," Butler points out that she is not unwilling to appear at political occasions "under the sign of the lesbian" as long as it is "permanently unclear what that sign signifies" (308). There is a value to treating the category of children's literature as likewise unstable or "permanently unclear." This is not because we should not "abandon" the task of defining children's literature as Marah Gubar argues (210), but because it is precisely the debate about what counts as children's literature in the first place that opens up spaces for fictional as well as actual children to be

just as full of possibility as the books and reading practices they encounter. This space of debate and possibility creates the conditions for reading children's literature perversely and, in turn, for understanding the perversions that have populated it.

Reading perversely has been central to the work of queer theory, and I would like to suggest here that we can do more with perversion in our theorizations of young people and their texts than we have yet dreamed of. Perversion obviously has a much longer history than queer theory, but uncovering this history precisely as a history of perversion has been contemporaneous with—if not a motor of—the very development of queer theory. Long taken to oppose the natural and defined by Richard von Krafft-Ebing as "that [which]

does not correspond with the purpose of nature” (52–53), perversion came to be understood less in terms of opposition to normative frameworks and more as a feature or an effect of them (a version of them, if you will). In *Sexual Dissidence*, for instance, one of Jonathan Dollimore’s projects is to “retrieve the lost histories of perversion” (27), which returns him to the theology—and not just the sexology—of perversion. Dollimore concludes that this theological history reveals a central, persistent facet of modern perversion: “the shattering effect of perversion is somehow related to the fact that its ‘error’ originates internally to just those things it threatens” (121). What had seemed deviant, insubordinate, or perverse originates in the very thing to which it seems opposed.¹ This insight has been key for other theorists such as Mandy Merck, whose own “deviant readings” build on Dollimore’s work in order to advocate that “willfully perverse misreadings” (6) be seen as a condition of all reading, a universalizing rather than a minoritizing move, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick would have it.² To read perversely is thus to account for the perversions that find the kernel of their origin in what we take to be normative.³ It is a way of locating perversion at the centre of Western life and thought.

In turn, this kind of reading has allowed us to see what is wonderfully perverse in texts that have been staples of the canon of children’s literature. One of the aspects of children’s literature that I have always

found fascinating is its insubordinations: its sites of dissident or non-conforming children, its failures, its surprising circulations, its appropriations—even its misuses—and especially, to invoke Jacqueline Rose, its impossibilities.⁴ The stretch for impossibility makes for some of the best and most unruly works of children’s literature. We get children who never grow up (Peter Pan), children who sail in and out of weeks (Max), children who fall through rabbit holes into the centre of the earth (Alice), and children who can pass through wardrobe walls into entire other worlds (Narnia). Who does not love it when the White Queen from *Through the Looking Glass* insists that she has sometimes “believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast” (Carroll 153)? These are what we might call the normative perversions of dailiness within children’s literature: the kinds of perversions that contravene our usual ways of thinking but that we have delighted in accepting as features of the genre.

There are other perversions of children’s literature which prove less fanciful or palatable, however, perversions (in some cases *per-versions*: distinct, sometimes one-off versions of children’s literature) that do more to unsettle the comfortable ways we have come to think about texts for young people. Children’s texts have come to be taken up in surprising and unexpected ways, and often to unpredictable effects: they sometimes backfire in their attempts to produce the children they claim merely to address;



The attention of queer theory to perversion can thus take us an even greater distance toward thinking impossible things and for refusing the demands of normativity in theorizing young people and their texts



they are recirculated in creative ways by children or even adults; they become the objects of address or rewriting when adults find themselves somehow writing back to texts of their childhood as if to expose the limits of the genre itself. The attention of queer theory to perversion can thus take us an even greater distance toward thinking impossible things and for refusing the demands of normativity in theorizing young people and their texts—whether those demands take the form of refusing definitions-as-usual (as they do for Butler) or the temporal constructions of possibility (as they do for the White Queen).

In the sections that follow, I would first like to offer up something of a perverse reading of the engagement of queer theory with the child, in order to celebrate but also to expose the limits of that engagement. Secondly, I would like to call attention to the comparatively small but burgeoning engagement of queer theory specifically with children's literature. Finally, I would like to conclude with some examples of the ways that theorizing perversion can continue to expand our understanding of the cultural reach of texts for young people, as well as the complexity of engagement at the interface between children's literature and its readers. Continued focus on the dialectical relationship of perversion to its putative origins might lead us to consider the ways in which perverse reading itself is generative: of surprising interpretations of texts for children, of new modes of sociability, and radical new iterations of stories we all once thought were only for children. Such per-versions of children's literature can also usefully undermine the normative narrative of child development and identity formation that persists in much of our thinking about children within and beyond books.

1. The Children of Queer Theory

The engagement of queer theory with the child has always owed a lot to the concept of perversion, primarily because in its early day it was so engaged with pushing back against (but also working within) psychoanalysis. No matter how many accounts I read of this history, however, I find it surprising to see a focus on psychoanalysis as a focus on childhood—perhaps because the child and children seem so frequently to be an afterthought, a subfield, or a *cordon sanitaire* of psychoanalytic literary study more generally. Michael Cobb nonetheless does a persuasive job of describing the engagement of queer theory with the child in a long review essay entitled “Childlike: Queer Theory’s Children” (in the interests of full disclosure, I note that it includes a review of *Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children*, the volume of essays I co-edited with Steven Bruhm in 2004). Cobb argues that this engagement goes back at least to Sedgwick’s “How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay” and to Michael Moon’s “The Gentle Boy from the Dangerous Classes,” both of which were reprinted in our edited collection. The final essay in *Curiouser*, which was singled out for special attention from almost all reviewers, was Kathryn Bond Stockton’s piece “Growing Sideways: Intervals of the Queer Child,” an essay that has since been expanded into book form as *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*. What all of these works (and many more) have in common is an

interest in the figure of the child quite generally and in the ways that we narrate the unfolding of subjectivity in time and through narrative form. The child is less audience than character and its perversions have consisted of alternative paths to (including delays of) sexual subjectivity.

More scandalous than thinking about the problem of queer or sexual children (and I am not diminishing the scandal factor—just ask Ellis Hanson, James Kincaid, or Laura Robinson what it means to teach, write, and speak publicly about children and sexuality),⁵ but more controversial in queer theory circles, was Lee Edelman’s polemical disavowal of the figuration of childhood altogether in his book *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. For Edelman, the child figures a profoundly heteronormative social order predicated on social and biological reproduction (and let me emphasize his emphasis on figuration). He argued against the logic of reproductive futurity for which the child is made regularly to stand and in favour of a politics of the present. Queerness, he says, names those not fighting for the children: “Fuck the social order and the Child in whose name we’re collectively terrorized; fuck Annie; fuck the waif from *Les Mis*; fuck the poor innocent kid on the Net . . . fuck the whole network of Symbolic relations and the future that serves as its prop” (29). So it was that the figure of the child found itself at the heart of the most heated debates in queer theory—a

debate that has, in many respects, paradoxically left the child behind and morphed into one about refusing futurity. Edelman's earlier essay, "The Future Is Kid Stuff," spurred a terse debate with John Brenkman about queer politics in the pages of *Narrative*, whereas Jose Munoz's recent book, *Cruising Utopia*, argues explicitly against Edelman and for queer utopianism, insisting that racialized constituencies in particular simply cannot afford to abandon the politics of hope embedded in the idea of futurity. That assumption in turn is being challenged, I think, by some critical race theorists (which is a whole other subject of debate).⁶

My own feeling is that each of these sides misreads the other side of the debate in lots of productive ways,⁷ but the point is that the debate here is rich and heated as it circles around the extent to which the queer child is even possible. Whether you are for or against a queer child, you cannot possibly ignore the fact of the engagement of queer theory with the figure of the child.

To point to the history of this engagement with the figure of the child is not at all the same thing as pointing to its engagement with children's literature, however. The latter has tended to be either elided or eclipsed in these queer theoretical debates. The objects of analysis for most queer theorists have been works for adults that represent queer children. Similar kinds of analysis of children's literature have simply not risen to the same kind of status. When Steven Bruhm

and I solicited essays for *Curiouser*, one of the areas we specified in the call was for queer considerations of children's literature. We had both taught children's literature—Steven had even developed a course on gay and lesbian children's literature—so we knew there was lots to say. We received only one essay in the area, however, one that ultimately did not even make it into the collection—perhaps a sign that our call had reached more queer theorists than children's literature people, or that the child that interested most people was the child of psychoanalysis or the child of literature writ large, rather than the child of children's literature.

Before that time and since, lots of wonderful work has been produced on queer theory and children's literature, even though it still does not get the circulation it deserves. Kenneth Kidd states the problem nicely in his reflection on queer theory and children's literature in a recent issue of *PMLA*:

The larger point is twofold: first, queer theoretical work on (queer) children's literature has been ongoing for some time and merits more attention from those outside the field, and, second, we've only just begun the project of queer-theorizing children's literature, which should involve scrutiny of queer theory's formation *by* childhood or Childhood and perhaps also by children's literature. (187)

I think there is more to be said about what comes next. While it seems to me that a lot of commentary already exists about queer theory's formation *by* childhood, the extent to which children's literature has participated in making queer childhoods—as well as queer theories—is less well-travelled terrain.

2. Queering Children's Literature

This terrain is beginning to be explored by books like Kidd's own collection, edited with Michelle Ann Abate, *Over the Rainbow: Queer Children's and Young Adult Literature* and Tison Pugh's book *Innocence, Sexuality, and the Queerness of Children's Literature*, both of which were published recently. Essays by scholars such as Robin Bernstein, Sherrie Inness and Michele Lloyd, Catherine R. Stimpson, James Gifford, and many more have blazed a trail to this moment of emergence. What their work has in common is a desire to uncover a longer history of gender and sexual dissidence in works of children's literature ranging from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and *Little Women*, to the Nancy Drew series, *Harriet the Spy*, and the Harry Potter books.

As important as I think the work on queer characters is in the history of queering children's literature, it would be a mistake to see the usefulness of queer theory solely as a way of understanding same-sex desire among children or of considering one more kind of identity formation, now among children. I may

not fully agree with Edelman's polemical assertion that queerness only ever names those *not* on the side of the child, but I do agree with another claim that he makes: that queerness does not name an identity but can only ever disturb one. To read child characters queerly may not, in fact, be the same thing as reading children's literature queerly. Reading children's literature queerly means reading for its non-normativities more broadly. This point brings me back to the perversions of children's literature.

3. Perversions beyond Character: The Stories that Cannot Be Told

What has attracted my interest recently are the perverse uses to which children's literature has been put, the ways its characters might resist social norms of gender and sexuality, its failures to inhabit literary genres properly, and the unexpected circulations it enjoys. Each of the sections that follows lays out, in cursory form, an example of some of the ways we might further theorize the perversions of children's literature (and perhaps the perversions of young people themselves).

a. Perverse Genres


Some of these perversions are cases of gender and genre transgression that owe a great debt to feminist scholarship and theorists of reading and genre. When I read Mark Twain's short story "Hellfire Hotchkiss," for

instance, I am interested not only in the central tomboy figure in the tale, but in the fact that the surviving manuscript is unfinished. How might one write the story of a tomboy who does not end up like the Jo March of *Little Women*, married to Professor Bhaer and disavowing her worldliness and her sensationalist tendencies in favour of, well, writing books like *Little Women*? What might it mean instead to read a novel of childhood perversely, as many children read? Is it like the way early American Mary Rowlandson read the Bible—non-linearly? (see Warner 13–38). What might it mean to read *Little Women* for what I like to think of as the murky middle of the book—those delicious places where Jo has fully organized an alternative world for herself where she alone gets to play the parts of boys and speaks in slang? Would such a reading uncover works that seem like such outliers in the field, like L. Frank Baum’s *Ozma of Oz*, which features as title character a child princess who is kidnapped as an infant and raised as a boy by a witch until the secret is discovered and—poof—she just changes back to being a girl again?


Consider, by way of an extended example, Lois Gould’s 1978 novel *X: A Fabulous Child’s Story*, the tale of a genderless child who really does illustrate the extent to which not all contemplations of gender transgression go so far as to challenge the gender system altogether. The system of binary gender creates the conditions under which X stands as a challenge, in

this story, to the child-rearing beliefs of other parents, but by the end of the story, the “team of Xperts” declaration that X is well adjusted does not force any of the resistant parents to change a single thing about their own rigidly gendered child-rearing practices. What this text has in common with those discussed above is its refusal of completion at the level of story combined with its status as a precursor to modern trans (or refused-gender) stories. Hellfire Hotchkiss never grows up. The story is never finished (unlike that of Peter Pan, the more famous boy who refused to grow up), so the figure never undergoes the disciplining function of feminization in the way that Jo does. Baum, on the other hand, gives readers absolutely no information about the transition Ozma makes either from girl to boy or boy to girl. It is automatic and accepted—utterly without drama or complication. Likewise, in *X* we are never privy to the logic of the Xperts who uphold the desire of X and her family not to disclose the child’s gender. X is allowed to be X and even gets a sibling, Y. The story withholds the moment of unmasking demanded by normative parents. In their withholding of details, these fictions enact at the level of form an intervention in the normative content of stories about children.

It is in the rogue circulations of children’s literature, however, in the ways that audiences react to, write back to, and creatively revise children’s literature, that the possibilities for perversion can especially be seen.



Perverse child readers
of children’s literature
call attention to the
limitations of the ways
the genre tends often
to be read (in line with
its history of delighting
and instructing).



b. The Perverse Child Reader of Children’s Literature

Perverse child readers of children’s literature call attention to the limitations of the ways the genre tends often to be read (in line with its history of delighting and instructing). The result of mostly well-intended, “age-appropriate” reading strategies—or what Judith Levine has termed in the subtitle of her book “the perils of protecting children from sex”—can be cruel. The argument against exposing children to sexually explicit or queer material (as anyone familiar with the Alberta government’s Bill 44 well knows⁸) is to protect them and their parents from some kind of harm. Perhaps the worst harm that can be imagined for children relating to sex is child sexual abuse. I have always been fascinated by Ellie Danica’s work of autofiction, *Don’t: A Woman’s Word*, in which she describes the role that children’s literature played in her life, when she was a child being abused by her father and by his friends:

I decide that I will learn to understand. I begin to read about other children. But it is stupid. They live lives of pleasant days, children’s games. I don’t believe real kids live like that. Maybe those were Canadian kids. Maybe when I am a real Canadian, I will be able to live like that. . . . What will they do to a father who does the sort of horrible things my father does? But nowhere do I read that fathers are punished for what they do to daughters. Nowhere. I lose hope. I push myself to read harder books. Nothing gives me a hint of a life like mine. Nothing is even close. There are saints, there are Alcott’s Little Women, and there are holy martyrs. There is nothing else. I am wrong. (19)

A voracious consumer of books, the child Danica reads for realism: she expects books to confirm that there are indeed children like her. In a sense she is a model reader, exposing herself to books ranging from *Lives of Saints* to *Little Women*. Disappointed in the failure of books to reflect her life back to her, she nonetheless remains optimistic: she concludes that she must be reading the wrong books and implicitly recognizes that she has come up against the limits of the genre of books written for young readers:

I think there must be more books than I know. I get permission to go to the library downtown. There are interesting books upstairs, but I am sent into the basement. Here you are, dear, here are the books for children. But I don't want these. I've read most of them. You can't take out the books upstairs until you are an adult, those books are only for adults. (20)

What is striking about these passages from *Don't* is not just the horrifying context that gives rise to them, but the cruel consequences of the proper ways of reading that Danica has been taught and that she painfully illustrates in this description of her struggle for literary identification. Books for young people like her are supposed to be realistic and didactic, and she is supposed to read for identification. But "[n]othing [gave her] a hint of a life like [her own]." This failure is devastating for the ways in which it produces a version

of isolated childhood. The child who cannot even see herself reflected in a book is not just a lonely child but a bad one. By adult standards, Danica is a perverse reader precisely because she reads as she has been taught. She looks to stories to reflect back to her the life she is living—she reads for identification—but the life she leads is not the life of children's stories. Despite her voracious reading habits, children's literature has, in a sense, failed her. Even today, what book might a sexually abused and isolated child, taught to read for identification, find in a library? There are still no "lives like [hers]" represented in children's books, even if there are books and teachers that explain "good touch" and "bad touch." There remain some stories that cannot be told, even to the children who need them most.

c. Per-versions: Writing Back to Children's Literature

Perverse reading also has the possibility of producing other kinds of cultural artifacts. There is an emerging body of literature we might describe as queer revisions of children's literature by and for adults. This burgeoning subgenre is explicitly and unapologetically sexual. It revises beloved childhood classics as reflections on pornography, pedophilia, sex work, and childhood sexual precociousness. Examples include the lesbian performance, by New York City performance collective Split Britches, of *Little Women: A Tragedy*; Geoff Ryman's *Was*, the rewriting of *The Wizard of Oz* and its filming as a contemporary AIDS narrative; Francesca

Lia Block's modern transformation of "Sleeping Beauty" as the homoerotic "Charm" (24–31); and Justin Bond's performance of Kate Bornstein's "Dixie Belle," a recasting of Huck Finn as a transgender prostitute in his recent *Christmas Spells*. There are even Nancy Clue and Hardly Boys spoof novels by Mabel Maney. Perhaps the most outrageously unsettling example, however, is Alan Moore and Melinda Gebbie's *Lost Girls*, which narrates and illustrates the grown-up adventures of Lewis Carroll's Alice, J.M. Barrie's Wendy, and L. Frank Baum's Dorothy as they meet in a hotel in Paris on the eve of World War I to re-enact and build upon their childhoods as sexual playgrounds.⁹ Indeed, what all of these examples (and more besides) have in common is a kind of pornocratic imaginary, in which thoughtful revision of these texts indexes both the unglorified dangers of child sexual abuse and the pleasures of sexuality in explicit representations of both child and adult sexual experimentation.

d. Performative Perversions and New Readerly Subjectivities

Finally, there is the production of new social effects for childhood in the surprising ways that children's literature is taken up by sexually and gender dissident children. My best example of this is the way the mermaid figure, popularized by Hans Christian Andersen and Disney's versions of "The Little Mermaid," has developed into an icon for transgender children.

There are no doubt limitations to this engagement: the mermaid appeals primarily to transgirls (the merman is not nearly as popular for transboys), she tends to figure a white, passively self-sacrificing femininity, and the colonialist overtones of the Andersen story persist across the translation.¹⁰ Still, as parents and psychologists attest, the mermaid is a figure of profound identification for the ways she offers up both narrative (and an iconography) of bodily transformation.¹¹ This perverse reading of "The Little Mermaid" and the appropriation of her iconography have clearly generated a powerful cultural story that transkids themselves have participated in producing.

What all the examples I discuss above have in common are the ways they illustrate the productive potential for insubordination and perversion that comes with the kinds of proper, imitative reading we as a culture too often ascribe to and reproduce in children. As Judith Butler has argued (and as every player of the "telephone" game knows), imitation occasions the possibility of failure and comes with the potential for non-reproduction and, indeed, perversions. Attending to those perversions in a range of ways might allow us to think beyond the question of what is "queer about children," something that Karin Lesnick-Oberstein and Stephen Thompson cautioned us against in their essay "What Is Queer Theory Doing with the Child?" In their essay, one of the earliest overviews of the engagement of queer theory with the child, they argued

that leading with such a question can put us in the position of generalizing about the child, which seems counterintuitive to the aims of queer theory altogether. If we are to avoid such a pitfall, the next wave of queering children's literature must consider more fully the persistence of narratives of normative development in our thinking about both childhood and children's literature. Sustained attention to the productive failures of normalization as well as the expansive possibilities

of perverse childhoods and of reading perversely would allow us to see beyond a queering of children's literature focused primarily on individual characters in order to think instead more about the narratives of sociability and the acts of world-making at play in texts for young people. I hope our field can begin to theorize what can be culturally productive about reaching the limits of children's literature, as exemplified in such perversions of its texts.

Notes

¹ Dollimore proposes that in this theological prehistory of modern perversion, perversion is opposed less to the properly natural and more to conversion instead.

² Sedgwick takes up this problem in *Epistemology of the Closet*, in which she articulates a contradiction between "seeing homo/hetero . . . as an issue of active importance primarily for a small, distinct, relatively fixed homosexual minority (what I see as the minoritizing view), and seeing it on the other hand as an issue of continuing, determinative importance in the lives of people across the spectrum of sexualities (what I see as the universalizing view)" (1). In *Space, Time, Perversion*, Elizabeth Grosz responds to what she takes to be the limits of the universalizing of perversion as a transgression as a political good in itself: "there must be a space . . . for rethinking and questioning the presumption of radicality—not from a position hostile to radicalism or transgression . . . but from within" (5).

³ Perversion has been important not only to literary queer theorists. Other important considerations of perversion include Deborah Britzman's educational theory essay "Is There a Queer Pedagogy?" as well as psychoanalytic studies that continue to reflect on the foundational interest of that field in perversion. See, for instance, Nobus and Downing; Pajaczkowska; Roudinesco; and Penney.

⁴ Although Rose meant to undermine our certainty about the phantasmatic and seemingly formal separation of adult and child, I have always taken her observations about the impossibilities of fiction for children as the wellspring of my optimism about the field. Since the publication of *The Case of Peter Pan; Or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, Rose has become a fixture of children's literary criticism while remaining a lightning rod for debate. A recent special issue of *Children's Literature Association*

Quarterly devotes itself to understanding, if not overturning altogether, the status of Rose's compelling claims. See, in particular, Rudd and Pavlik.

⁵ For accounts of these scandals, see Bruhm and Hurley, "Curiouser"; Kincaid; and Robinson. Robinson's article on a possible lesbian subtext in *Anne of Green Gables* began as a paper presented at the annual conference of the Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English in 2000. Every major media outlet in Canada picked up this story, fanning the flames of scandal.

⁶ Jennifer Blair's unpublished essay "'So Childish'" makes this compelling argument by pointing to the ways that theorists of race such as Kyung-Jin Lee and Grace Kyungwon Hong embrace the politics of refused futurity.

⁷ Let me offer one example. On the one hand, Edelman's "anti-social" thesis is not the model of political solipsism or despair that Munoz makes it out to be. In resisting the social, Edelman does not deny the possibilities of queer sociability, but focuses on the logic of reproduction that underwrites the category of the social. On the other, Edelman's starting assumptions about the social do seem to presuppose that his abstract model of social reproduction operates

equally across all social constituencies. He thus misses the point that has been made by Munoz (but also by John Brenkman and others) that the affective capital (in other words, hope and political optimism about a better time) that derives from believing in futurity is more unevenly distributed in the phantasmatic space that organizes political life for many disenfranchised groups.

⁸ Bill 44 was passed in Alberta to grant parents the right to be notified in writing before any discussion of sex, sexuality, or religion was to take place in a public-school classroom. See "Alberta Passes Law."

⁹ My treatment of this graphic novel is forthcoming in an article titled "Alice Lost and Found."

¹⁰ I chart and analyze the appropriations of the mermaid figure for transkids more fully in my forthcoming article, "Little Trannies' Little Mermaid."

¹¹ Even the name of the organization for transkids and their families in the UK is titled simply Mermaids. Their website is available at <<http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk/>>. For additional examples of the prominence of the connection, see Beck; "My Secret Self."

Works Cited

- Abate, Michelle Ann, and Kenneth Kidd, eds. *Over the Rainbow: Queer Children's and Young Adult Literature*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2011. Print.
- "Alberta Passes Law Allowing Parents to Pull Kids out of Class." *CBC News*. CBC, 2 June 2009. Web. 26 Oct. 2011.
- Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women*. 1868. New York: Waldman, 2008. Print.
- Baum, L. Frank. *The Complete Book of Oz*. Radford: Wilder, 2007. Print.
- Beck, Koa. "Do Transgender Little Girls Have a Fascination with Mermaids?" *Mommyish*. N.p., 3 June 2011. Web. 4 Nov. 2011.
- Bernstein, Robin. "'Too Realistic' and 'Too Distorted': The Attack on Louise Fitzhugh's *Harriet the Spy* and the Gaze of the Queer Child." *Critical Matrix: The Princeton Journal of Women, Gender, and Culture* 12.1–2 (2000–2001): 25–47. Print.
- Blair, Jennifer. "'So Childish': Race, Queerness, and Time in Dionne Brand's *What We All Long For*." Unpublished essay, 2010.
- Block, Francesca Lia. *The Rose and the Beast: Fairy Tales Retold*. New York: Cotler, 2000. Print.
- Bond, Justin, perf. *Dixie Belle: The Further Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. By Kate Bornstein. Abrons Arts Centre, New York. 10 Dec. 2010. Performance.
- Brenkman, John. "Queer Post-Politics." *Narrative* 10.2 (2002): 174–80. Print.
- Britzman, Deborah. "Is There a Queer Pedagogy? Or Stop Reading Straight." *Educational Theory* 45.2 (1995): 151–65. Print.
- Bruhm, Steven, and Natasha Hurley. "Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children." Bruhm and Hurley, *Curiouser* ix–xxxviii.
- , eds. *Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2004. Print.
- Butler, Judith. "Imitation and Gender Insubordination." *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. Ed. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale, and David Halperin. New York: Routledge, 1993. 307–20. Print.
- Carroll, Lewis. *Alice in Wonderland*. 2nd ed. Ed. Donald J. Gray. New York: Norton, 1992. Print.
- Cobb, Michael. "Childlike: Queer Theory's Children." *Criticism* 47.1 (2005): 119–30. Print.
- Danica, Ellie. *Don't: A Woman's Word*. Berkeley: Cleis, 1994. Print.
- Dollimore, Jonathan. *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991. Print.
- Edelman, Lee. "The Future Is Kid Stuff: Queer Theory, Dissidentification, and the Death Drive." *Narrative* 6.1 (1998): 18–30. Print.
- . *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham: Duke UP, 2005. Print.
- Gifford, James. "Left to Themselves: The Subversive Boys' Books of Edward Prime-Stevenson (1858–1942)." *Journal of American & Comparative Literatures* 24.3–4 (2001): 113–16. Print.
- Gould, Lois. *X: A Fabulous Child's Story*. New York: Daughters, 1978. Print.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Space, Time, Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- Gubar, Marah. "On Not Defining Children's Literature." *PMLA* 126.1 (2011): 209–16. Print.
- Hurley, Nat. "Alice Lost and Found: A Queer Book History." *Textual Transformations in Children's Literature: Adaptations, Translations,*

- Reconsiderations*. Ed. Benjamin Lefebvre. New York: Routledge, forthcoming. Print.
- . "Little Trannies' Little Mermaid: A Shape-Shifting Tale." *Narrative and Repetition in Texts for Young People*. Ed. Mavis Reimer. New York: Palgrave, forthcoming. Print.
- Innes, Sherrie, and Michele Lloyd. "'G.I. Joes in Barbie Land': Recontextualizing Butch in Twentieth-Century Lesbian Culture." *NWSA Journal* 7.3 (1995): 1–23.
- Kidd, Kenneth. "Queer Theory's Child and Children's Literature Studies." *PMLA* 126.1 (2011): 182–88. Print.
- Kincaid, James. *Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child Molesting*. Durham: Duke UP, 1998. Print.
- Lesnick-Oberstein, Karin, and Stephen Thompson. "What Is Queer Theory Doing with the Child?" *parallax* 8.1 (2002): 35–46. Print.
- Levine, Judith. *Harmful to Minors: On the Perils of Protecting Children from Sex*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003. Print.
- Maney, Mabel. *The Case of the Good-for-Nothing Girlfriend*. A Nancy Clue Mystery. Pittsburgh: Cleis, 1994. Print.
- . *The Case of the Not-so-Nice Nurse*. A Nancy Clue Mystery. Pittsburgh: Cleis, 1993. Print.
- . *A Ghost in the Closet*. A Hardly Boys Mystery. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Cleis, 1995. Print.
- Merck, Mandy. *Perversions: Deviant Readings*. New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- Moon, Michael. "'The Gentle Boy from the Dangerous Classes': Pederasty, Domesticity, and Capitalism in Horatio Alger." Bruhm and Hurley, *Curiouser* 31–56.
- Moore, Alan, and Melinda Gebbie. *Lost Girls*. Atlanta: Top Shelf, 2009. Print.
- Munoz, Jose. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York: New York UP, 2009. Print.
- "My Secret Self." 20/20. 27 Apr. 2007. *YouTube*, n.d. Web. 4 Nov. 2011.
- Nobus, Dany, and Lisa Downing. *Perversion: Psychoanalytic Perspectives/Perspectives on Psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac, 2006. Print.
- Pajaczkowska, Claire. *Perversion: Ideas in Psychoanalysis*. London: Icon, 2000. Print.
- Penney, James. *The World of Perversion: Psychoanalysis and the Impossible Absolute of Desire*. Albany: SUNY P, 2006. Print.
- Pugh, Tison. *Innocence, Heterosexuality, and the Queerness of Children's Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2010. Print.
- Robinson, Laura. "Bosom Friends: Lesbian Desire in L.M. Montgomery's Anne Books." *Canadian Literature* 180 (2004): 12–28. Print.
- Rose, Jacqueline. *The Case of Peter Pan; Or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1984. Print.
- Roudinesco, Elisabeth. *Our Dark Side: A History of Perversion*. Trans. David Macey. Cambridge: Polity, 2009. Print.
- Rudd, David, and Anthony Pavlik. "The (Im)Possibility of Children's Fiction: Rose Twenty-Five Years On." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 35.3 (2010): 223–29. Print.
- Ryman, Geoff. *Was*. New York: Penguin, 1992. Print.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1990. Print.
- . "How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay: The War on Effeminate Boys." Bruhm and Hurley, *Curiouser* 139–49.
- Split Britches. "Little Women: A Tragedy." *Split Britches: Lesbian Practice, Feminist Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1996. 119–48. Print.
- Stockton, Kathryn Bond. "Growing Sideways, or Versions of the Queer Child: The Ghost, the Homosexual, the Freudian, the Innocent, and the Interval of Animal." Bruhm and Hurley, *Curiouser* 277–315.
- . *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*. Durham: Duke UP, 2009. Print.
- Stimpson, Catherine R. "Reading For Love: Canons, Paracanons, and

Whistling Jo March." *New Literary History* 21.4 (1990): 957–76. Print.

Twain, Mark. *How Nancy Jackson Married Kate Wilson, and Other Tales of Rebellious Girls and Daring Young Women*. Ed. John Cooley. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2000. Print.

von Krafft-Ebing, Richard. *Psychopathia Sexualis*. 1893. New York: Stein & Day/Scarborough, 1978. Print.

Warner, Michael. "Uncritical Reading." *Polemic: Critical or Uncritical*. Ed. Jane Gallop. New York: Routledge, 2004. 13-38. Print.

Nat Hurley is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta, where she specializes in the fields of Children's Literature, American Literature, and Queer Theory. She is co-editor, with Steven Bruhm, of *Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children* and is currently finishing two research projects: one, a monograph on literary circulation and the emergence of the queer novel in American literature; and a second on the perverse circulations and revisions of literary childhoods.