



Angels and Wild Things: The Archetypal Poetics of Maurice Sendak

John Cech

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This new edition includes a preface by the author covering Sendak's life, work, and cultural impact in the years since 1994.

Over the course of more than ninety books, in a career that spanned six decades, Maurice Sendak became the most influential and, at times, the most controversial creator of works for children. Each of the books in his trilogy—*Where the Wild Things Are*, *In the Night Kitchen*, and *Outside Over There*—was precedent setting, dramatically expanding the boundaries of subject matter and images that have been conventionally accepted in books for younger children. In this first comprehensive reading of Sendak's key works, John Cech considers the symbolic child who was developed in Sendak's books and who remained at the center of his vision.

By fusing biographical, historical, cultural, and literary materials with the insights of depth psychology and archetypal theory, this study traces the evolution of Sendak's work—from its first, bold steps in the 1950s, to its liberating breakthroughs of the 1960s and early 1970s, to the rich complexity of his later books. Cech concentrates on those books that Sendak has both written and illustrated. In these books, we can see most clearly the alchemy of his creative process, which wove together the remembrances of his own things past, the spirit of his times, the history of children's literature, and Sendak's animating concern with the archetypal figure of the child—a symbol of creative potential, emotional vitality, and spiritual renewal.

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