

# Greyfoot

**The trickster as facilitator in women's individuation process.**



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## Why this Folk tale?

Throughout years of art- and psychotherapeutic work with both me and my clients, the therapeutic use of fairy tales and the area: "*The wounded feminine*" has been of great interest to me.

In preparation for this essay, I read many different folks- and fairy tales and when I reached *Greyfoot*, I got physical reactions such as nausea and dizziness and got curious.

My favourite fairy tale has always been *Rapunzel*, which is about a princess trapped in a tower, and in a way, the princess here reminded me of that tale.

It made me reflect on whether the fairy tale chooses me as much as I choose it. I looked through some of my previous art therapy works and found a series I felt I had to include. Without knowing why, just an open curiosity towards the process.

Could I learn more about my own process through working with the folk tale and its symbols – and how?

In my search for different versions of the folk tale, I asked ChatGPT and at the same time got a summary that ends with the words: "*In the end, they reconcile, and she admits her mistakes*". Here an irritation arose in me, and I felt like the princess in the fairy tale wanting to reject and defend myself. Questions arose. "*Whose fault? 'Maybe you haven't tried to understand why she reacts the way she does and instead calls it mistakes – as in 'apparatus failure', I heard my thoughts race and thought: What if it wasn't a 'mistake' but something that felt misunderstood and stuck in a patriarchal paradigm?*" My irritation gave me a drive and a want to contribute to Chat GPT's large database with the princess's perspective – because I couldn't find that anywhere.

## Greyfoot

Greyfoot is a so-called folk tale, which is characterized by having been handed down, often over thousands of years. The folk tales have roots that reach down into the depths of the people and therefore express to a particular extent the collective and archetypal aspects of the psyche, in contrast to the cultural fairy tales, which have a specific author such as Hans Christian Andersen.

Von Franz (1994, p. 16) writes that the fairy tales differ from the myths by being more raw, unfiltered, and with universal themes.

Greyfoot exists in several versions, including works by Jesper Ewald, Ingvar Bondesen, J. Byskov and Preben Ramløv. These versions vary slightly in detail and style, but the basic narrative is the same. I have chosen Svend Grundtvig's classic version from 1884 in an English version by J. Christian Bay (1899, p. 35-46). The fairy tale is attached in its full length in Appendix A.

## Analysis based on Pia Skogemann's eight-part Structural Model

The tradition of interpreting fairy tales in analytical psychology goes back to C G Jung (CW, 9.1. par 384-455), who showed us how archetypal structures can be seen in fairy tales as something common human that lies behind our apparent differences. Von Franz (1996, p. 1-45) studied fairy tales systematically based on Aristotle's dramaturgical model and thought it was important to compare them with similar motifs in other fairy tales. Skogemann (2017, p. 8-26) problematizes this structural model, arguing that fairy tales are more narrative than dramaturgical and she has developed an eight-part structure model that she calls "*The Double Wedding*".

If folk- and fairy tales are to be called true individuation tales they must, according to Skogemann's model, have two times four sequences.

These are:

First	[	1. Background
		2. Outward Impulse
		3. Detachment
		4. First Conjunctio
Second	[	5. Crisis
		6. Loss and Isolation
		7. Achievement and Victory
		8. Second Conjunctio

In my analysis, I will use Skogemann's model for my analysis, elaborate on selected symbols and link them to psychologically relevant structures. Greyfoot contains these eight sequences and meets the criteria for a true female individuation folk tale, as we now shall see.

### 1. Background; Two Kingdoms and no Queen

Skogemann writes (2017, p. 17), that in most fairy tales there is a foreplay where the parents of the heroine are introduced. In Greyfoot, we are introduced to the King of England and his haughty daughter. We do not hear anything about the queen, neither in the English nor in the Danish kingdom. If we look at the fairy tale from Von Franz's dramaturgical model (1996, p. 39), we see in the exposition the classic beginning: "*Once upon a time*", which points to the realm of the collective unconsciousness.

### The number Two

We are also made aware in the introduction that four people are divided into two countries, with two in each country. Von Franz thought it was important in the second stage, which she called "*Dramatis Personae*", to count characters, before, during and at the end of the fairy tale.

*"Two means a pair of opposites, or even enemies.... The number two is never whole. It always contains an unresolved tension "* (1974, p. 85).

The fact that four people with two in each country is introduced in the beginning, can point us in the direction of tension, conflict and longing for one's other half. (masculine- feminine, light-dark, conscious- unconscious). One can say that unity is the unconscious whole that splits into two, and that two is the conflict that arises when consciousness differentiates from the unconscious.

In this way, two becomes the symbol of the split, the alienation and the longing for one's opposite in the psyche.

In alchemical psychology, the number two appears in the *Conjunctio Oppositorum*, the sacred union of Sol and Luna (king and queen), symbolizing the union of opposites (Schwartz-Salant, 1995, p. 1-36).

The folk tale ends with the number two – now in Denmark and with a queen. Perhaps it shows that the end of a process is the start of a new. Or maybe immersion of the same. Now let's look at some of the other symbols here in the first part of the folk tale.

### The King

The king is often seen as a symbol of the ruling, organizing and ordering principle of the psyche – the Logos principle. Jung (CW, 12. par 57-99) associated the king with the alchemical symbol Rex, who often appears in the stage that deals with the union of opposites.

Von Franz (1996, p. 51-55) elaborates on the king archetype and writes, that the king cannot have any more children without his queen and the kingdom becomes sterile and stagnant, where there is a dominant collective attitude with too much emphasis on the Logos, and where the connection to Eros, the feminine, the unconscious, the irrational has been lost.

### The Princess

Von Franz (1972, p. 40-54) believes that the princess can be seen as an anima symbol and often symbolizes the infant, pure, innocent, undeveloped and valuable aspects of the psyche that often must be saved from the unconscious or from destructive forces. The princess can be seen as a female aspect that has not yet entered her own authority – often trapped in paternal identification or in dependence on external approval. In many folk and fairy tales, the princess is the one who must leave the castle, go through trials, and learn independence and integrity before she can become queen.

The princess symbolizes the feminine, which has not yet been through psychological death and rebirth. She can be seen as the inner child of the adult woman who must go down into her body, feel sorrow, shame, humiliation, etc. to get back to her wild roots and her queen identity.

Our princess is described as haughty and dismissive, with a sharp tongue that aggressively attacks anyone who gets close to her. Her words are like thorns, a theme that we also see in the Grimms fairy tale *Sleeping Beauty* (1909, p.143), and her strategies are often to compensate for an inferiority created by a patriarchal social attitude, by provoking and rejecting with her sharp words and haughty attitude.

Such women are often trapped in a power complex and an infantile attitude to life, where they tyrannize everyone around them and especially all approaching suitors. She is caught in a web of opinions and attitudes, that isolates her from any kind of relationship.

Von Franz called such women “*trapped in an animus-cocoon*” and writes that it is important that women get the negative animus under control, otherwise it will isolate her from life itself (Hannah 2011, p. 97).

The folk tale begins with the words: “*Once upon a time, there was a king of England who had a famous, beautiful, dismissive, and haughty daughter. At the same time, there was a prince of Denmark who had heard about this beautiful princess.*” (Appendix A, p 26)

Here we start with an absent mother and a father/daughter, which may lead to thoughts of whether it is really the king and the prevailing patriarchal situation which is the problem? Are we dealing with a father who has his own anima projected onto his daughter, whom he loves so much that he unconsciously has bound her in a psychological, incestuous relationship, where boundaries are blurred and where an internalized loyalty to the father weakens the daughter's autonomy and relation to the feminine in herself?

Jung associated the incest motif with a regression to the original impurity, where the mother and father are not yet separated from the child. A condition that causes stagnation in the daughter's psychological development and prevents individuation – especially if the daughter remains subject to the father's authority or acts as a container for his unconscious projections. He writes:

“*The father is the representative of the spirit whose function is to oppose pure instinctuality. That is his archetypal role, which falls to him regardless of his personal qualities*” (CW, 5. par 396).

Kalsched (1996, p. 41-55) describes psychological incest as a dynamic in which the father – emotionally or physically, makes the daughter a substitute for the mother and binds her in a

symbiotic relationship that forms the basis of what he calls "*the anti-libidinal self-care system*", where the father is kind and loving towards the daughter but unconsciously uses her to fulfil his own emotional needs, which leads to a reversal of roles, where the daughter internalizes a protector-persecutor complex that inhibits her ability to set boundaries and form relationships and where she may find it difficult to take ownership of her life.

Leonard (1982, p. 50-117) calls such a woman *The Amored Amazone*, whose greatest need is control. She sees men as weak and impotent individuals that she must shield herself from. Such women are often stuck in a "*puella/perverted old man*" dynamic and trapped in a rigid authoritarian masculine system.

When the father principle that gives an inner authority is missing, it gives way to this old perverted negative animus structure. When the father image is ruined, so is the relationship with men. What is needed is an acknowledgement of the ego's inflated, narcissistic attitude, which has tied her to her father's shadow and an unconscious inferiority complex.

I think these are some of the central themes that the folk tale addresses. Greyfoot succeeds in freeing the princess from this invisible bond, and she goes through a lot of trials and suffering before she finally falls into place in her authentic feminine strength, where the masculine and feminine are equal. The way out of the false and back to the authentic Self is to develop the positive animus, and this is where our Danish prince comes into play.

## 2. Outward Impulse; *A Journey across the Sea*

According to Skogemann, this phase is about the ego-like impulse that initiates the heroine's development, which leads away from home and the longing for the unknown other (2017, p. 17).

In the first part of the fairy tale, we are told that the prince is in Denmark and the princess is in England, which suggests a separation, a split, something that is far from and perhaps longs for each other. The impulse does not come from the princess, but from a prince far away who has heard of her beauty. He decides to win her hand no matter what. Three times he sends for and three times he is rejected. He then disguises himself as the beggar Greyfoot and the liberation begins. Let's take a closer look at some of the many vibrant symbols in this phase.



## The Prince

The prince is a universal archetype that is seen in many different fairy tales and cultures, often as a symbol of the woman's inner animus, which must be discovered, liberated or integrated into consciousness. In folk tales such as Grimms *The Frog Prince*, (1909, p. 9), the prince appears as the redemptive masculine that must be activated through the woman's devotion and courage. In other fairy tales such as earlier mentioned *Sleeping Beauty*, (Ibid, p.143), the prince is seen as the fertilizing one, who awakens the woman's unconscious and sets the individuation process in motion. Jung writes: (CW, 9.2. par 14) " *The animus often appears as a prince, a lover, a saviour or a redeemer.* ".

Post Jungian thinkers such as Yong-Eisendrath (1997, p. 68-75) criticize the traditional understanding of the animus, which according to her is deeply rooted in our patriarchal paradigm. She suggests that women's individuation in modern times requires a critical awareness of how the prince's image is internalized and used in self-narratives.

In her perspective, the woman must develop an agency outside the prince's narrative and transcend this narrative to achieve real self-realization.

Here Skogemann's (1994) concept of the daughter archetype comes into play as an equivalent inner image in women's individuation process.

I find Yong-Eisendrath's critique exciting and relevant in the present moment in time. I remember a recent analysis session where a new figure had appeared in my work, which I automatically associated with a masculine young support. When my analyst asked; "*How do you know it's masculine?*" it made me reflect on how ingrained it is in my consciousness that the rescuer is masculine and how much in need we are of new concepts to balance the existing patriarchal narrative.



10.02.25 "Meeting



### Two Countries and the Sea between.

Two countries and the sea between can symbolize a split in the psyche, a split between the ego and the Self. It is noteworthy that in both England and Denmark, the queen is absent, which supports my earlier assumption. Psychic separation and division are often expressed through symbolic geography as we see here with separate land (CW, 6. par 63).

The fact, that the king and princess on an island (England) can symbolize a closed psychological landscape where the princess is held captive in a system where the father is idealized and remains psychologically dominant. A princess trapped in such a system, with a repressed system of instinct, is likely to experience the longing as a bodily longing but not necessarily understand its symbolic meaning until an external impulse - which the prince provides, evokes it.

### The Number Three

Much of the movement in the second phase takes place back and forth between countries at sea, i.e. in the unconscious part of the psyche. The sea is a primordial symbol of the unconscious feminine, of depth, (Ronnberg & Martin, 2010, p. 36-39) and it calls for the possibility of transformation. The fact, that so much traffic in the first part of the tale takes place at sea, suggests that unconscious content rises to the princess's consciousness, a feminine primordial force and strength that rises perhaps. The prince makes three cunning and gradually intense attempts to win the princess's heart. According to Von Franz (1970, p. 37-45), the number three is a classic fairy tale motif that often symbolizes movement in the psyche. We see that the prince's attempts are becoming increasingly intense. On the first try, the impulse is weak and is delivered by courier. The princess easily fends off this. In the second attempt, six white horses are sent, which may indicate an intensification of movements in the unconscious. There are three golden symbols, three approach attempts, and three rejections. The numbers three and six are consistent in what Von Franz (1996, p. 37-50) calls the 3rd phase with the ups and downs of the adventure.

### Six White Horses

In the second attempt, six beautiful white horses are sent with pink muzzles, golden shoes and scarlet blankets. The horse as a symbol carries heroes and heroines in many tales and myths and often acts as a mediator between the unconscious and conscious ego. The horse represents instinctive and vital aspects of the psyche (Ronnberg & Martin, 2010, p. 450-451), particularly related to the libido and the unconscious psychic energy. The horse can be seen as a psychic auxiliary structure or function, a symbol of the life-sustaining often animus or anima related guiding principle.

Jung often equates the horse with the libido. He also wrote about the horse belonging to the animal, instinctual side of the psyche.

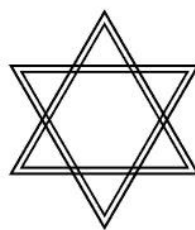
*".... The hero and the horse seem to symbolize the idea of man and the subordinate sphere of animal instinct" (CW, 5. par 421-422)*

In traumatized individuals, libido and instinct energy can be attacked from within, or suppressed by the defences. The fact that the princess orders the hair on the horses to be cut off, may indicate that she is in the mercy of these inner armed forces and is actively, unconsciously damaging her connection to her own vital, instinctual and erotic aspects.

Perhaps it can also be seen as the princess's unconscious attempt to free herself from the paternal bond and turn the regressive direction of the libido into an extroverted energy, or can it be seen as an attempt to control and suppress the free expression of the libido. Perhaps it is wiser to look at both aspects, where one-part acts from the false self and the other from a more authentic but still unconscious part of the psyche.

Jung connected the number six to the hexagram, where the upward triangle symbolizes the masculine, the fire element, and spirit, and the downward triangle symbolizes the water element and the feminine, symbolizing the union of opposites.

*" The hexagram is a union of two triangles, one pointing up and one pointing down, and thus a symbol of the conjunctio oppositorum " (CW, 11. par 133).*



Von Franz (1974, p. 39 – 42, 90 – 91), sees the number six as a harmonious number, and as a symbol for Eros, for connection, relationship, eroticism and balance. It is this union, that the princess, both consciously and unconsciously, sabotage with her words and actions.

The fact that the horses are white may point to the albedo phase as we see it in the alchemical tradition. It is a necessary purification phase before the union and can be a long phase of challenges and suffering that aims to illuminate and raise awareness (Ronnberg & Martin, 2010, p. 660).

Considering the above, I think it makes sense, that the princess defends herself and tries to keep her current position firm.

#### A Ship decorated with fine Animal carvings

The prince makes another strenuous, third attempt to break through to the princess and this time with a large and magnificent ship, whose railing is "*adorned with magnificent animals that jumped about*" (see Appendix A p. 27).

The ship is often seen symbolizing the soul's journey across the unconscious waters, a kind of mythical motif of soul navigation, and can be seen as a kind of container and protector from the depths of the unconscious sea. According to Von Franz, (1972, p. 102) this mix of animal symbols representing different qualities and instincts, is often seen when the unconscious tries to make conscious content that is far away from consciousness.

They are perceived by the conscious ego as demonic and dangerous, which is probably the explanation why the princess sinks the ship during the night and declines the invitation to contact the deep sea. She is afraid and sabotages this attempt to free the libido from the strong unconscious paternal bond.

#### The Gold

In the second attempt the horses are equipped with golden horseshoes and in the third attempt we see the ship equipped with a golden mast. It seems as if the gold motif is intensifying. The golden horseshoes may point in the direction that the prince is trying to ground the instinctual powers, to raise and release the libido, and in the mast this motif intensifies. Gold as a symbol can according to Von Franz (1970, p. 83) be understood as the eternal and transcendent, in contrast to copper and silver, gold is indestructible and immortal.

According to Edinger (1994, p. 76), the many boat trips can be seen as an alchemical solutio process, in which the princess's defences are slowly weakened, and that which obstructs the free flow of libido is dissolved.

In phase two, we see psyche's development through a gradually stronger impulse from the Self. The princess's defences are strong, and she has managed to fend off all attempts at rapprochement so far. She rejects in a devaluing and scornful manner and remains tied to the incestuous relationship with her father. A bond that often leads to trauma-based narcissism, where the daughter internalizes the father's gaze and becomes trapped in a false self. To survive, she develops primitive defences such as dissociation, idealization, and "acting out" (Blackman 2004, p. 44-79).

In Woodmann's works (1982, p. 90, 138-139, 168-170, 180-181) the daughter is often seen trapped in a psychic structure, where she mirrors the father's needs and transfers her life energy to him, which makes it difficult for her to create an individual identity. If she has idealized the father and the defence is split, the negative part of the split will be projected on the men who approach her which may explain her massive rejections, her inflated ego position, and the devaluation of her suitors.

### 3. Detachment; *Here comes Greyfoot*

According to Skogemann (2017, p. 18) this phase is all about the journey out into the world, and often the hero or heroine acquires magical properties or objects, and this is exactly what happens in this part of the tale.

#### The Hero Trickster

None of the prince's previous attempts have succeeded, and the Danish king is furious, the prince decides to go to England himself disguised as the beggar Greyfoot, who cleverly breaks through the princess's defences and approaches her. Greyfoot can be understood as a trickster archetype, who is a well-known transformer in many myths and fairy tales, among others we know him as Loki in Norse mythology, Coyote in native American fairy tales and Hermes in Greek mythology.

The prince – as a trickster figure can be found in several fairy tales, among others in H.C. Andersen's: *Clumsy Hans* (2022, p. 436-57) and Grimms: *King Thrusbeard*, (1909, p. 147), where the trickster plays a significant role in breaking through the princess's infused, psychic defences. With humour, cleverness, patience, creativity and cunning, he succeeds in destabilizing the princess's rigid defences and sends her into development.

He is characterized by being contradictory and paradoxical, with the ability to change form he adds both disharmonizing and dynamic elements to the process of development (CW, 9. par 456-458).

What further characterizes the trickster character is, that instead of strength and wealth, he uses wisdom and humour to undermine rigid defence structures, which is exactly what he does here in our tale. He manages to arouse the princess's curiosity and desire, when he walks in the garden with the three golden symbols. She wants them, and he agrees to give them to her in exchange for – not money that she offers him, but for time and presence. Again, three attempts are seen, which indicates constant movement in the psyche, where Greyfoot gradually gets closer to the princess until he is finally in her bedroom.

#### 4. The first Conjunction; *Greyfoot and the Princess meets*

This is where the first meeting between prince and princess takes place, and three significant symbols are introduced: the golden ten, the gold roller and the weaver shooter.

##### Three golden Symbols: The Ten, the Roller and the Weaver shooter

The gold symbols are recurring in this section, where the golden ten is a frequently used symbol in fairy tales and is associated with feminine creativity and transformation. The round shape can also be seen as a dynamic feminine tool that connects us to our instinctual primordial power our ancestors and connect to our unique self's path of destiny.

The gold roller and the weaver can both be seen as symbols of the masculine principle, so perhaps the round ten shape and the two phallic symbols are in fact the stage for a union of the masculine and feminine in the psyche?

The gold symbol is a frequently used symbol for the Self in fairy tales. We see this, for example, in Grimms fairy tales (1909, p. 9-165) *Rumpelstiltskin*, where the miller's daughter is to spin straw into gold. In *The Golden Bird* where a golden bird is stolen and must be found and returned to the kingdom and in *The Frog King* a golden ball falls into a well and the frog (the instinctual, rejected parts) helps to get the golden ball up.

In myths we often find the use of golden symbols. For example, in the Greek myth of *King Midas*, for whom everything he touches turns to gold - perhaps a warning against an inflated ego and a warning not to glorify materialistic gold for Soul-related values such as friendship, closeness and love.

A theme I think is also touched on here in the tale, where Greyfoot persistently rejects the princess's gold rather than her presence. In the first meeting, we see how Greyfoot, with his humble manner, does not allow himself to be lured by the princess's gold, but holds on to her demands for time and closeness, and is gradually allowed to approach her.

#### 5. Crisis; *Kicked out of the Castle*

The king discovers the two in the princess's room, orders them to marry and to leave the castle. The king, who is usually described as a calm and friendly man, is furious when he discovers Greyfoot in the princess's chamber, and perhaps this is helpful to the process, as he can free his daughter from some of his shadow material. We are told that the king is not one to get angry, but we see that the king of Denmark can, as we experience him seething with rage when the princess rejects his son and unscrupulously destroys both the horses and the ship. The Danish king threatens to take revenge, but the wise prince, with his cleverness and patience talks him out of it. When Greyfoot enters her

bedroom (which must be seen as a symbol that he has broken through her defences), the anger also enters in the form of the angry king's father, who demands that they both marry and leave the castle. Here a turning point in the fairy tale occurs. The phase corresponds to what Skogemann (2017, p. 18), describes as a regressive crisis in relation to a parent figure.

Greyfoot and the princess set off for Denmark and we hear that the princess is very relieved when they are finally out of her father's domains.

## 6. Loss and Isolation; *The beggar's life*

In this phase, the heroine typically must go through a long series of trials, and so does our princess. They travel to Denmark and rent a small cottage, and here the princess learns to spin, to beg, she learns about poverty, humility, helpfulness and love, and she even learns to love her Greyfoot. Here one can speak of a classic shadow integration of the sides she haughtily projected onto her suitors and mocked them for at the beginning of the fairy tale. "*I'd rather spin, sit on the street and beg than to marry you*" – and that's what she's going to do.

### Horses and masculine Rider destroying the Princess' Clay Pots

We see the horse symbol again, and this time a galloping horse with a male rider destroys the princess 'earthenware (in the picture in Appendix A p. 32 it is jars).

If we think of the horse as carrier of eros, instinct and spontaneity as previously mentioned, one can say that the libido with the erotic-instinctual aspects is now liberated. According to Von Franz (1995, p. 20-30), pots and jars can be seen as feminine symbols that are carriers of content, and this content is now being liberated.

Here we see an animus attack that leaves the princess crying and helpless. When she tells Greyfoot about the episode, he is supportive, which may point to a development of the princess's positive animus and a weakening of her defence system. During the time with Greyfoot, her relational skills have been strengthened, and she accepts the support of her husband.



## 7. Achievement and Victory; *The final trials*

Here follows a final effort, where the couple must learn to cooperate and the active part reaches a point where the other must take over and show, that she fully responds to Love, which can be seen as a successful animus integration. She acts independently and in a way that defends love and relationship.

In this passage of the tale, Greyfoot falls ill (not really, but he says so) and the princess works in the castle's kitchen preparing for a wedding between the prince and a Russian princess, we are told. (The prince trickster has no problem telling lies). However, the Russian princess is late and therefore the prince needs a substitute who must have the right measurements. All women in the kingdom are summoned and whoever has the right size becomes the bride's deputy. Of course, our princess has, and when the crown is put on her head, a carriage pulled by six white horses, with a prince rides up and she gets in – she does not recognize the prince as her Greyfoot. Now let's take a closer look at some of the symbols here.

### Six White Horses and the Couple in a Karet.

Here again we see the six white horses, and this time they are hitched to a carriage where the prince and princess are sitting. This can indicate that the instinctive and vital aspects of the psyche now guide the anima and animus unhindered, and the libido flows freely.

### The Burning Cottage

They pass the burning cottage, a significant symbol representing home and personality (Ronnberg & Martin, 2010, pp. 556-557). The fire is an alchemical motif for calcinatio, a purifying process that burns away old complexes and ego-driven attitudes (Edinger, 1994, pp. 17-47). This stage cleanses the princess's inflated ego, allowing qualities like love, humility, and honesty to emerge. Having endured an ordeal likened to Hell or purgatory, she is now prepared to move forward.

The princess passes her final test by insisting on her loyalty to her husband, despite the prince's offer. The prince then reveals his identity and acknowledges her faithfulness, to which she responds that her hardships have been valuable. These challenges are necessary for personal growth, allowing the Ego to prove itself ready for the union with the Self.

The folk tale illustrates that the woman's individuation involves inner trials rather than external challenges, helping her develop qualities like humility, patience, discernment, and resilience.

The female heroine does not have to catch the prince but to transform herself to become worthy of the union.

Again, we see the trickster who with cleverness and cunning organizes the entire kingdom.

### Does the Wedding Dress fit?

All the women in the kingdom are summoned for measurement, and the one who fits the dress becomes the bride's deputy. The royal meter is busy and when he reaches our princess, the dress fits perfectly.

The theme of final measurement is well-known. We see it in Grimm's fairy tales such as *Cinderella*, (2003, p. 70) where the shoe must fit, and in *The Little Goose Girl* (2003, p. 305-311) where the true bride is revealed through hair samples.

The measurement can symbolize the garment of the Self and a kind of psychological individuation test. We can see it as symbolizing a ritual selection, akin to alchemical tests.

Hillmann writes (1979, p.112) that the individuation journey is about finding the right pattern that fits one's inner nature, i.e. about finding one's own right form. He writes that the soul always longs and searches for its form, and that individuation is about "Soul-fitting".

The princess has successfully completed the required assessment and is now prepared to assume the role of Queen of Denmark.



*"Soft Fabrics" Artwork by Helle-Sofia 2019*

## 8. The second Conjunctio; *The Danish Queen*

The fairy tale ends with a wedding in Denmark and the sentence: *"Thus England's haughty princess became Queen of Denmark"* (Appendix A, p. 34).

We have thus moved from two persons in two countries at the beginning of the folk tale, to two persons in the same country, which may indicate a healing of the split.

The princess has passed her trials and can now enter an equal love relationship with her prince. The phase corresponds to what Von Franz (1972, p. 41) calls *"Lysis"* and ends with a small *Rite de Sortie*, where the last line abruptly brings us back to reality: *"However, it happened so long ago that no one remembers having seen her. But the story is nevertheless true"* (Appendix A, p 34).

### The Queen

For the first time, we see the queen archetype, representing the feminine ruling principle and an embodiment of the mature, authoritative, and maternal aspect of the feminine. The queen conveys wisdom, structure and integrity. She is often the mature woman who has gone through a long process and symbolizes wisdom, responsibility, and order. She is the feminine Self in contact with her inner centre. Woodman (1985, p. 78-95) sees the queen as a symbol of integrated body and soul – a woman who has overcome the internalized patriarchal gaze and now rules with strength and compassion. Bolen (2004, p. 109-124) connects the queen with the goddess Hera, who represents partnership and structure, while emphasizing the necessity of self-government.

The queen archetype then becomes central in the tale, symbolizing a fully realized female personality who embodies transcendence, power, and relational wisdom. She is an active participant in the transformation, as we see at the end of the story, where Greyfoot falls ill, and she acts heroically both by her statements and actions. (Appendix A p. 34).

They are united in marriage as King and Queen of Denmark.

Edinger (1994, p. 215-232) writes, that the second conjunctio is produced by a final union of the purified opposites. It's the final goal of the alchemical work and is often seen in the images of a marriage between the King and Queen, Sol and Luna, masculine and feminine. The princess new standpoint now as a queen, her acquired qualities and relational skills, has contributed positively for this union to happen, and has contributed to a positive individuation and unity with the Self, the eternal light, and transpersonal realms of the psyche.

We can thus see the fairy tale as a female individuation journey where, through strong impulses from the Self and the unconscious, the princess's Ego has succeeded in integrating several aspects of the totality of the Self. She has integrated several individual ego skills and can now enter an equal relationship with the masculine principle, because she stands tall, strong and steady in herself.

### Association; *My Own Images*

In reading through the essay, I was curious about my bodily reactions such as nausea and dizziness and therefore explored my art therapy works from 2016 to today. I found a series of five images, that resonated with the folk tale. The pictures are inserted below with my reflections and connection to the tale.

During the symbolic work with the essay and the parallel inner process, the symptoms came and went. I see it as a kind of bodily teaching of the material and think that it is very symbolic of the journey back and forth at sea – and the maturation of the queen archetype in me. It was an important realization.



*Image 1 "My OM Boat" 2016*

Image 1 shows a clay figure of a boat transporting various elements from the kingdom of the sun to the land. The boat is equipped with two animal heads, which can be associated with the boat with the many animal carvings that the prince sends in the third attempt. It has since appeared to me in dreams, when the sea has been restless and has given me a sense of security and stability, and became a kind of psychic navigation tool between the conscious and the unconscious realm of the psyche.



*Image 2 "Father and me" 2018*

Image 2 "*Father and Me*" shows a naked five-year-old girl bleeding from the genitals into the ground, and the soil nourishes the father. The father is black, which may indicate that the nourishment goes to his shadow.

Here we see an example of a psychologically incestuous father-daughter relationship. The girl looks happy, but she is bleeding. She does everything for her father to make him happy and comfortable. To feed father's shadow, she must annihilate herself and her own needs, causing her sexual and instinctive energy to become regressive. The repressed instinctual feminine has turned away from its archetypal feminine root: *the moon*, which is seen shining strongly in the background. The power of the red energy that she needed to free herself is tied to her father's shadow. The picture can be associated with the first phase of the tale, where the princess lives at the castle in England with her father.



*Image 3 Liberation 2018*

The third image in the series is called "*Liberation*" and corresponds to the phase Skogemann (2017, p. 18) calls "*Detachment*". The trickster archetype emerged with his destabilizing qualities. I remember sitting for a long time in front of the image, now fragmented into pieces, not knowing what to do. I knew that the red figure in the middle was important – I just didn't know at the time that it could symbolize this destabilizing Trickster figure.





*Image 4 "The Queen and the Trickster" 2018*

Image 4 shows the queen who has emerged strong and with authority and reads a decree to the shadow figure, who now looks more like a fool/trickster.

When I made this picture, thoughts like: "*You are not worthy of me*", "*you are ridiculous*", "*I am embarrassed of you*" and a lot of demands on him to change, which I understand now are typical animus thoughts arose, I got thrown right back to the castle in England, feeding fathers shadow.

When I revisit the picture at the time of writing, I smile, as it is still a working point for me to find the balance, to learn to become so comfortable in relation to the masculine that I can enter an equal relationship. To put the negative animus in the test tube and put the plug in and let him mature into the King he is.



*Image 5 "The Royal Wedding" 2018*



The last image in the series is called "*The Royal Wedding*". The red figure now acts as the king's genitals, and there is a golden flow of energy from her to his mouth. The balance is restored, and the libido flows freely. That the energy flows from her to him is interesting, we also see that here in *Greyfoot*, where the princess shows courage and strength at the end, we see it in "*Hansel and Gretel*", (Ewald, 1909, p. 51) where Grethe at the end pushes the witch into the oven when she wants to roast Hans, and thus she saves them both. In the Norwegian folk tale "*The Master Maid*" (Asbjørnsen 1960, p. 204-217), we see how a prince who works for a troll is helped by the princess at the end. In "*Jomfru Malene*" (Ewald, 1909, p. 487), she refuses to marry and is therefore locked up in a tower. She breaks out herself, manages in poverty and works as a maid for her beloved. When someone else tries to take her place, she exposes the deception and regains it.

Here we see examples of folk and fairy tales in which the feminine is an active participant in the last part of the individuation process, and in where Eros and Logos order are restored by the active efforts of both.

Image five corresponds to the second conjunctio of the tale.

It looks idyllic, but they have since been close to divorce many times, which is why I think it makes good sense that the tale *Greyfoot* does not end with: "*They lived happily ever after*" – no, no, because in the totally happy relationship – we have to be extra careful, because according to Hannah (2011, p. 150), this is where we are even more exposed to identification with the animus and where many more intensive trials must be overcome.

To examine the essay as a female individuation journey, where Eros is initially absent and the libido is locked in an old patriarchal paradigm, has been exciting and rewarding and has contributed to my own individuation. Along the way, I have had several interesting dreams, where the number three is recurring and shows a movement in the psyche from the first to the second conjunctio, still sailing back and forth on the great sea between England and Denmark. In my dream it was Mols Lines between Zealand and Jutland - an important journey where I learn about inferiority, inflation, trust, anxiety, humility and serving.

I have a better understanding of my longing in life for the spiritual, the emotional, for art and colour. The longing was mine, but also bigger than me. Maybe I just felt a collective longing, maybe it was never personal. Maybe we just live on the big myth.

Along the way, I came across a concept of "*Spiritus Rector*", (2011, p.146-147), a kind of directing spirit, as Jung called it, that lies behind women's motivation and drive. The completely new thing for me and a rather big discovery is that I also have something to say and that I don't have to believe

everything I hear from my animus – but that the equal dialogue via active imagination is important. In this way, I am approaching an embodiment of my queen archetype and what Skogemann (2017, p. 19) calls "*the second wedding*". I am there sometimes in glimpses – but not yet stable and am aware that it requires time and lots of dedicated individuation work, maybe you will never really be finished.

As the number three always comes after the number two.

After analysing the folk tale essay and the connection to my own work, which I have included a bit of here, I think it makes a lot of sense to look at folk- and fairy tales as archetypal structures we can use supportive in our own and our clients' individuation journey.

I am aware that my interpretation and work with symbols is limited because my vision is limited.

Thus, symbols such as the horse, gold, trickster and other symbols I have touched on can be viewed from many different angles without ever being able to give an exhaustive explanation.

## Discussion

Perhaps in the light of the currents in post-Jungian psychology with Skogemann, Woodman, Bolen, Hillman and Yong-Eisendrath, we can identify a movement towards a more balanced understanding of the relationship between Eros and the Logos? This is relevant in a Western culture that favours the Logos principle – the rational, goal-oriented, and separative – at the expense of Eros, which represents relation, connectedness, and emotional depth. In a culture characterized by performance and control paradigms, addiction – whether it is alcohol, work, social media or consumption – becomes a kind of symptom of a fundamental disconnection from the relational and meaningful layer of existence that Eros represents.

Hillman speaks of the "*Loss of Soul*" in modernity, where quantification and streamlining have eroded existential and relational depths (1975, p. 200-211).

If we read the folk- and fairy tales as psychological development stories, they may point to how balance arises through relationship, maturation and transformation, and in this way function as guides to healing the cultural split between Eros and Logos, and perhaps thus also as a cure for the dependency structures that arise in the absence of this balance. The question therefore becomes whether, from a post-Jungian perspective, we can reactivate the wisdom of these tales as a collective psychological practice – not just as entertainment or children's education, but as a living source of individuation and cultural renewal.



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## GREYFOOT

J. Christian Bay in "*Danish Fairy & Folktales*"

1899 New York and London Harper and brothers' publishers



HERE was once a king of England whose daughter was very famous. She was the most beautiful princess ever seen or heard of. But she had one great fault—namely, that she was haughty and proud. Of course she had many suitors, but all were refused, and as she possessed a sharp tongue, she moreover scorned them, giving nicknames to everyone who was bold enough to woo her.

At that time there was a young prince in Denmark. The fame of her beauty had reached him, and he sent word, asking for her hand in marriage. The princess answered, however, that she would rather earn her bread by spinning all her life than marry such a poor and miserable prince. The messengers were obliged to return with this unfavourable response.

The young prince had determined, however, that he would win her. He despatched fresh messengers with letters and sent her a gift consisting of six beautiful horses, white as milk, with pink muzzles, gold shoes, and scarlet rugs. Such horses had never been seen in England before, hence the king put in a good word for the Danish prince: He who could send such a gift of betrothal must be considered her equal. But the beautiful princess ordered the grooms to cut off the manes and tails of the six steeds, to soil them with dirt, and turn them over to the messengers, whom she instructed to tell the prince that rather than be married to him would she sit in the street and sell earthen ware.

When the messengers returned, relating all that the princess had said and done, the Danish king became so incensed that he wanted to put to sea with all his ships and revenge this insult. His son asked him, however, to desist from any such action; he wished to attempt once more, by fair means. If he were unsuccessful, he would himself know how to take revenge. To this his father assented.



The prince now built a ship, so beautiful and costly that it's like had never been. The gunwale was artistically carved with all sorts of animals; deer, dragons, and lions were seen jumping about, and the stem and stern were richly gilded. The masts were mounted with gold, the sails made of silk, every second canvas being red, and the remainder white. This ship was manned with the handsomest lads in the country, and the prince gave them a letter to the king of England and his proud daughter, the princess, asking her to accept him, and receive the ship as his gift of betrothment.

The gorgeous ship rapidly crossed the sea and stopped immediately outside of the royal palace. It commanded general attention, no one having seen such a magnificent vessel before. The couriers landed and delivered their message. Now the king used his best efforts to persuade his daughter: A suitor so wealthy and munificent, so true and devoted as this prince, certainly deserved a favourable answer.

The princess graciously listened to his entreaties, feigning an intention to think the matter over until the next day. But at night she gave orders to sink the ship, and in the morning, she told the couriers to return as best they could; that she would rather beg her food at the doors than call their poor fellow of a Danish prince her husband.

The couriers returned to Denmark with this disdainful answer, and with the tidings of the fate of the king's ship, which was now, with its gilded masts and its silken sails, at the bottom of the sea. Upon hearing this, the king at once determined to man his fleet and take a bloody revenge. The prince dissuaded him, however, vowing solemnly that he would make the haughty princess repent the disdain with which she had treated him.

Upon this he left Denmark quite alone, and reached England, no one knowing him. Disguised, as he was, in an old hat, dingy clothes, and wooden shoes, he arrived at the palace towards evening and asked the herdsman for a bite of bread and a couch. He obtained both, and during the night kept company with the cows in the stable. The next morning the beggar—Greyfoot, so he called himself—sought and obtained permission to help in driving the cattle to their watering-place. The latter happened to be situated exactly outside of the windows occupied by the princess. Greyfoot now opened a bundle which he had brought with him and produced a golden spindle which he proceeded to use in driving forth the cows. The princess, who was standing at one of the windows, saw the spindle, and taking at once a great fancy to it, she sent some one down to inquire whether the beggar was willing to sell it. Greyfoot answered that he did not care to sell it for money; the price he asked was permission to sleep outside of her door the following night. No, said the princess; she could not think of such a price. "Very well," answered Greyfoot; "that settles the matter, and I keep my

spindle."

The princess had taken it into her head, however, that she must possess the beggar's treasure, but as she did not like any one to know that such a poor-looking man was admitted to the palace, she sent a secret message by one of her maids, telling him to come late at night, and to be gone early in the morning. This he did.

When the princess looked out of the window the next morning, she noticed Greyfoot chasing the cows with a golden reel, and at once sent one of her maids down to inquire whether it could be



"THE COURIERS LANDED AND DELIVERED THEIR MESSAGE"

bought. "Yes," said Greyfoot, "and the price is the same as yesterday." When the princess heard this, she was not a little astonished by the audacity of the beggar, but as the treasure could be obtained in no other way, she assented, and everything passed as on the previous night.

The third morning Greyfoot drove the cattle to the watering-place, as usual, but this time he was using a weaver's shuttle of pure gold. She sent for him, and when he appeared in her presence she said: "Now, Greyfoot, how much do you ask for *this* treasure of yours? Will you take a hundred dollars for it?" "No," answered Greyfoot, "it cannot be bought for money. If you will permit me to sleep inside the door of your room to-night, you may have it." "I think you are mad," said the princess. "No, I cannot hear of any such price.

But I am willing to pay you two hundred dollars." "No," said Greyfoot again; "it must be as I say: If you want the shuttle, you must pay the price which I ask. Otherwise, I will keep the treasure myself."

The princess looked at her maids, and they looked back at her, and all looked at the magnificent shuttle. She *must* possess it, whispered the maids; they would sit in a circle around her, keeping guard the whole night. Finally, the princess told Greyfoot that he might come late at night; they would let him in. He must be careful, however, and tell no one, since they were all running a great risk. When it grew late, and the princess was about to fall asleep, the maids were all sitting around her, each one holding a lighted candle in her hands. Greyfoot entered and quietly stretched himself on a rug near the door. But as the maids were not accustomed to much waking, one by one they became drowsy, and very soon everyone in the room was soundly asleep. As the ladies had rested little during the two previous nights, it was no wonder that the sun did not wake them very early the next morning.

The king, who was accustomed to see his daughter at the breakfast-table, became alarmed when she did not appear as usual, and hastened to her rooms. Imagine his surprise when he found, outside of her door, an old hat and a pair of well-worn wooden shoes. Opening the door quietly, he stole into the room. There the princess was, fast asleep, with all her maids; and so was Greyfoot, on the rug inside the door. Usually, the king was a very amicable and quiet man, but when this spectacle met his eyes, he became angry. He controlled himself, however, and called his daughter's name aloud. She awoke, and so did the maids, who at once escaped in all directions. But the king turned to his daughter and said: "I now see what kind of company you prefer, and although it is in my power to let this fellow hang and have you buried alive, I will allow you to keep each other. The minister shall unite you in marriage, whereupon you will both be



"DEAR GREYFOOT, DO NOT WALK SO FAST!"

sent away. I will never bear the sight of you again." The king left them, and shortly afterwards the minister appeared with two witnesses. The haughty princess was married to Greyfoot, the beggar; then the couple were at liberty to go whither they desired.

When they passed the barn-door Greyfoot turned to the princess, saying: "We cannot walk on the high-road in this style; you must change your clothes before we depart!"

So, they paid a visit to the herdsman's wife, who gave the princess—now Greyfoot's wife—a gown of linsey-woolsey, a woollen jacket, a cape, and a pair of heavy shoes. "That fits better," said Greyfoot, and they walked away.

At first, they walked each on his own side of the road, without speaking; but in a little while the princess raised her eyes to look at the man who was now her rightful husband. To her astonishment she observed that he was neither old nor ugly, but really a handsome young man, despite his old and dingy clothes. Being not accustomed to walk very far, especially with such heavy footwear, the princess soon felt exhausted, and said: "Dear Greyfoot, do not walk so fast!" "No," he returned, "as I have now been burdened with you, I suppose I cannot leave you on the open road." So, he entered the next house and hired an old carriage, the bottom of which was covered with straw. They now drove on, until at length they arrived at a seaport. Greyfoot immediately sought and obtained passage for himself and his wife, as servants, and the princess felt much relieved when at last they were out of her father's domains, although she had no idea of their destination.

The voyage ended in Denmark, and when they had safely landed, Greyfoot proceeded to rent a small hut in the neighbourhood of the royal palace. It consisted of only one little room with a stone floor and an open fireplace, where she must prepare their frugal meals. In a little while Greyfoot went out and returned with an old spinning-wheel and a large bundle of tow, of the meanest quality. "While you work with this," he said, "I must try to find some occupation, as best I can. Neither of us can afford to be idle."

Thus, time passed slowly and quietly. Greyfoot had secured work at the palace as a woodcutter and returned every evening with a loaf of bread and a few pennies. His wife was spinning until her fingertips were scorched, and her knees shaking under her. One evening Greyfoot brought home a wheelbarrow filled with earthen ware. This he had bought on credit, he said, and she was in duty bound to go to town the next day and sell the things. She of course made no objections. The next day Greyfoot went to his work, as usual, and his wife set out for the town with her earthen ware. But when she had just managed to sell a few of them, a troop of stately knights came galloping down the street. One of the horses became wild





"THE MISFORTUNE OF THE PRINCESS"



and rushed in among her articles, which went into a thousand pieces under the heavy hoofs which trampled upon them. The riders pursued their way; but the poor princess returned to the hut, and, sitting down, wept bitterly.

In the evening, when Greyfoot returned, she told him of her misfortune. "Now we are utterly unfortunate," said he, "for I have no money with which to pay for these articles. You will now have to sew a wallet, go from door to door, and beg for victuals and pennies, until our debts have been paid." The princess did as he bid her, and was glad that her husband did not scold her for her ill fortune. She begged at every one's door, bringing home, at length, several pieces of bread and some pennies.

"That will not bring us very far," said Greyfoot, when the princess had displayed the contents of the wallet. "I have now found a good place for you at the palace. They are preparing for a wedding, and to-morrow you are to lend a hand in the kitchen. Do your best and make yourself useful; maybe they will keep you and pay you good wages. To-morrow you will obtain your meals and twenty pennies."

The next morning, before Greyfoot's wife went away, her husband said: "To-day I must stay at home; I have felt an illness coming upon me, so I will rest and try to get better." She burst into tears, and told him that when he was ill, she could not think of leaving him. When he answered, however, that she was expected, and necessarily must go, she kissed him good-bye, hoping that he would soon feel better, and promising to return as speedily as possible.

"The haughty princess" spent the whole day among the pots and pans in the royal kitchen. When she returned to the hut, Greyfoot told her that he felt better, and further related how an order had been issued announcing that the Prince of Denmark was to be married to a Russian princess. Her costly bridal-gown had arrived, but the princess herself, having been detained by wind and waves, was unable to arrive in due time for the ceremony, and on the following day every girl and woman was to present herself at the palace and be measured. She who filled the measure would be selected as the bride's deputy. "And you," concluded Greyfoot, "you must put in an appearance. If you are fortunate, your wages may be sufficient for paying our debts."

In the morning Greyfoot declared that he felt worse than on the day before but would not keep her from going. She hesitated, but as he insisted, she threw her arms around him, kissed him, and left.

The royal measurer was busy among the many women assembled in the courtyard, and it seemed impossible to find anyone who was the right measure. But when at length he reached Greyfoot's wife, he declared that she was the very person they wanted. Now she was taken into the palace, and attired in the gorgeous gown, the bridal veil, and a pair of exquisite slippers.

When finally, the crown was placed on her head, everyone declared that the *real* princess could hardly be prettier. In a little while a beautiful carriage drawn by six milk-white horses was seen at the door, and Greyfoot's wife was asked to enter. The prince was already seated in the carriage; she had never seen him but remembered having heard of him in past days.

They drove along the road until they came to Greyfoot's hut. Seeing already at a distance that it was a fire, the poor woman in the carriage uttered a piercing shriek, and cried: "My husband! save him, for Heaven's sake! He was ill when I left him and may not have escaped." The prince now spoke to her for the first time and said: "If that ugly woodcutter is your husband, you had better leave him; he is no husband for you." But she answered: "He is my husband and was always good and kind to me. How could I leave him? Even if you offered me the place which I am now occupying for your real bride, I would refuse it and gladly return to the hut where I have lived the happiest part of my life!"

The prince smilingly answered: "You *are* my real bride and kept your word when you said that rather than marry me would you earn your bread by spinning, or by selling earthen-ware, or beg for it at the doors."

Now she recognized him, and throwing her arms around him, she said that her sufferings had been of great benefit to her, and that she would now stay with him forever.

Thus "the haughty princess of England" became queen of Denmark. This happened so long ago, however, that hardly anyone remembers having seen her. But the story is true, nevertheless.