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Part A - Theory

1 The fairy tale genre

As with most genre definitions, boundaries to neighbouring text types are pervious and fluctuating; several typical characteristics are shared among similar text types, their origins may be the same, structural parallels occur. In the case of fantastic fiction, the group of closely related genres to be considered includes fairy tale, myth, legend, and modern fantasy fiction, the last of which can be viewed as an advancement of the more traditional genres listed before.

In his chronology of fairy tales, Steven Swann Jones lists, among classic narrations of the fairy tale genre, stories such as *The Water Babies, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, The Wizard of Oz, Peter Pan, The Hobbit, The Cat in the Hat* and *Where the Wild Things Are* (xvif), some of which we may be more inclined to call simply “children’s books”, or, when appealing to adults, fantasy literature. This is a first hint at the complexity of definition, but also at the enormous wealth of text types associated with non-realistic fiction, past and present.

1.1 Folklore origins

One of the most striking common characteristics of the above text types (except for the “newest” form, Fantasy fiction) is that they are originally oral narratives. There is no definite author, only a story teller (Jones xi), a fact that is also linked to the genre’s unequalled age: Since oral literature of course predates any written fiction, it is safe to proclaim that fairy tale, myth and similar (sub-)genres are among the oldest forms of human story telling as such (Jones 1).

There usually exist several, or even countless versions of what can be argued to be the same basic story, always depending on the level of differentiation vs. generalisation used in the comparison. Confronted with this “culturally
widespread expressive phenomenon”, Jones refers to C.G. Jung and Joseph Campbell, who both argued for “a universal appeal to the human spirit, that the genre [fairy tale] inherently addresses fundamental questions of human existence […], and that, accordingly, the key to the meaning and popularity of fairy tales may be found by looking on this universal level” (Jones 29).

In *The Fairy Tale, The Magic Mirror of Imagination*, Jones sums up approaches to categorize traditional folklore texts as follows: “Folklore scholars generally recognize three major forms of folk narrative: myth, legend, and folktale” (8), the last of which Jones subcategorizes into fables, jokes, novellas, and fairy tales. He characterizes myths as “narratives that use gods […] to explain the operation and purpose of the cosmos” and man’s place within it; legends are “quasi-historical narratives that use exceptional and extraordinary protagonists” in order to “depict remarkable phenomena to illustrate cultural ideas, values, and norms.” The last group is defined as “entertaining narratives that use common, ordinary people as protagonists to reveal the desires and foibles of human nature” (8).

Jones highlights the importance of the type of main character the narrative revolves around: “Immortal protagonists are linked with the immutable laws of the cosmos; their situations and actions illustrate cosmogonic and paradigmatic principles. […] Consequently, audiences relate to myths as sacred and esoteric texts. […] Legends serve as social guidelines for behaviour and are regarded as having a certain historical and cultural truth embodied in them. Finally, the ordinary protagonists of folktales remind us of ourselves, and their quests and questions are on a very personal level the same as ours” (Jones 8f).

Jones also differentiates the above text types by their objectives; myths seek union with a greater wholeness, legends aim for “initiation […] into the cultural ideals of behaviour”, and fairy tales, as the meekest, deal with the demands and wishes of the personal and domestic sphere (Jones 16). They depict individual development throughout a single person’s life cycle rather than the advancement of society or (re-)union with the divine.
1.2 Myths

Segal, in his introduction to Jung’s writing on mythology (Jung on Myth) distinguishes three types of myth: creation myths, god myths, and hero myths (JOM 28). The first group tries to give an explanation of how the earth, or even the whole cosmos, came into being; the second group deals with the doings of immortal beings and their influence on the human realm.

These are also the kind of myths Becker refers to in his definition, where he calls myths stories of gods, their actions in the world and in heaven and hell (“Mythos”). They are told like real occurrences, but outside normal time (illud tempus), and explain where gods, the world and man comes from. Becker adds that this information is often revealed in pictures and symbols (“Mythos”). Eugen Drewermann also focuses on these types when defining myth: „[Erzählungen], die anhand bestimmter Naturvorgänge zeig[en], von welcher Art die Kräfte und Gesetze sind, die das Leben der Natur gleichermaßen wie das menschliche Dasein tragen und bestimmen“ (FH 24).

The third kind of myth, finally, deals with quests undertaken by single individual heroic human figures. “Freudian and Jungian theories best fit hero myths, since the subject matter of myth for both is striving and accomplishment” (Segal JOM 28). Joseph Campbell’s works and his theory of the monomyth also best fit this profile, and it is the closest in structure to fairy tales. The monomyth is a model claiming that all myth and myth-like stories follow the same basic pattern, i.e. a single plot outline that includes a call to adventure, a threshold crossing (into another realm that represents the unconscious as well as the supernatural dimension), various tests and helpers, a climactic confrontation, a boon, a return crossing, and a reincorporation of the protagonist back into society (Jones 132).

There is a great tradition in psychoanalytic myth interpretation, which seems only natural given how similar myth, fairy tale and related genres are to dreams, Freud’s via regia to the unconscious. Freud popularly analyzed works such as the Oedipus myth, where “the adult [is] still neurotically tied to the infant stage of development” (Segal JOM 28) and to the mother, who he wants to make into his
(sexual) partner, thereby competing with the father. Freud concentrated on psychological developments happening before the establishment of a strong, secure ego, whereas Jung, in his accounts of mythological and fairy tale material, views “psychological development all the way forward [...] to the state beyond the development of ego consciousness, which is the classic Freudian end” (Segal JOM 28).

Mircea Eliade, Romanian historian of religion and philosopher, points out how Freud mistakenly focuses, for example in the notorious Oedipus complex, on the real individual mother, “hic et nunc”, while the real subject matter is “das Bild der Mutter schlechthin”, with its cosmologic, anthropologic and psychological impact. Confusing the archetype of the Great Mother, with all its contradictory aspects, with one’s real mother in the flesh, is therefore the actual source of neurosis and a mistake Freud does not eliminate from his theory (EBS 15).

1.3 Legends

In legends, the hero is presented as a real person (“Miller X”, “Farmer Y”) who used to live in the vicinity and experienced something extraordinary. The main character is fully human and shows individual reactions; his thoughts and emotions are still part of the story (“he was very frightened, but...”). Both the fairy tale and legends are tales about wondrous experiences, but the legend depicts something unique; only this one person could ever experience this certain event (likely even linked to a specific place). A fairy tale, on the other hand, could “happen” to anyone (Bettelheim 39).

Marie-Louise von Franz theorizes that legends, these archetypical stories, start being told when an individual experiences “eine[n] Einbruch aus dem Unbewussten” through dream or hallucination, some numinous experience. Each of these happenings then builds the core of a new story that uproots and travels (von Franz PM 198-201).

Von Franz further argues that such a story was told and retold with many changes and abstraction processes, in which the feelings, as individual
reactions, started to get lost, until the protagonist became a rather one-dimensional character with stereotypical reactions. The story, then, is not about Miller X anymore, but about “a miller” – which brings it closer to the fairy tale genre:

In den sogenannten Erlebnissagen ist das Persönliche, das zur Begegnung mit einem Archetyp führt, voll erhalten. Die sogenannten Zaubermärchen hingegen wirken im Verhältnis dazu wie Abstraktionen. Wir verdanken sie einerseits der dichterischen Phantasie eines Volkspoesets sowie auch der Tatsache, daß dadurch die Erzählung, aus ihrer lokalen Gegebenheit gelöst, zum Allgemeingut werden kann. (von Franz PM 197)

Legends are therefore local stories about numinous happenings, often in some way connected to local places (a monastery, a mill), which can turn into the more abstract narrative form of fairy tale through retelling and loss of specificity. Note that this is not the only possible explanation for the creation of fairy tales; further accounts will be introduced later in the paper.

Max Lüthi, a literary scholar prominent in the field of fairy tale interpretation, has pointed out as the main difference between fairy tales (“Zaubermärchen”) and legend (“Erlebnissage”) the fairy tale’s high level of abstraction; its main characters are simplified and downsized to the most basic structures, stereotypes – archetypes (von Franz PM 8).

1.4 Fairy tales
There is a magnitude of approaches in the respective literature to characterize and define fairy tales. In the following section, I have summed up recurring defining characteristics.

1.4.1 The incorporation of the fantastic as real
Jones points out how magic, unrealistic characters and events are the most vital characteristic of fairy tales; in contrast to myth and legend, “which depict life in fairly realistic terms”, fairy tales include unbelievable, miraculous happenings “as a valid part of human experience” (Jones 9).
Animal fables do not, as it seems on first sight, include the marvellous or any magical events; their only non-realistic aspect is the fact that animals are anthropomorphized; the actions themselves are comparatively normal, everyday. Tall tales, incredible exaggerations, are not to be taken at face value by the audience but use hyperbole to create comic effect (Jones 10).

Fairy tales and myth on the other hand incorporate the abnormal as normal and expect suspension of disbelief from the audience. “Scholars such as Axel Olrik, Max Lüthi, and Bruno Bettelheim concur with the designation of fantasy as one of the essential characteristics of the fairy tale” (Jones 10). Jones continues that “[t]he incorporation of fantasy may be regarded as the most salient formal or stylistic feature of this genre” (12).

An interesting thought to be added on the suspension of disbelief is that just like myth and ritual “are accepted for what they are experienced as“, following a logic of “‘make believe’ – ‘as if’” (Campbell 22), fantastic literature, too, relies on the reader’s willingness to suspend their disbelief, to get into the game and participate in the fiction. Campbell considers this ability to be a “universal characteristic of man”; “the phenomenon of self-induced belief” is a “primary, spontaneous device of childhood, a magical device, by which the world can be transformed from banality to magic in a trice” (22).

1.4.2 The high level of abstraction

Another characteristic commonly named for fairy tales in the relevant literature is its high level of abstraction. Characters are not described in great (or any) detail, apart from maybe one central adjective (good farmer, lazy son); their personality unfolds through their surroundings, attributes, and, most importantly – actions (Bühler 27).

Regardless of whether this is an effect of the before-mentioned supposed development of local legends into wide-spread fairy tales, or rather an intrinsic characteristic due to its archetypal setup – it is an obvious formal feature of the fairy tale remarked on by almost any author considering the genre, for example
Bühler: “Seine abstrakte Darstellung lässt uns keinen Augenblick im Zweifel darüber, daß es Wesentlichkeit darstellen will, nicht Wirklichkeit“ (56). The supposed underlying function of abstraction, here, is to express a clear and central idea in a straight-forward manner – and reality, with all its complexities and shades of grey, is never as clear cut and straight-forward as the black-and-white world of fairy tales.

Jones also points out the protagonist's unambiguous character and actions; he highlights how these make it easy to identify with the character in a positive way. Identification is further encouraged by not giving the protagonist a name but calling them 'a young boy/girl', 'the Miller's daughter', 'the youngest of three sons' etc. (Jones 17).

Fairy tale characters are likely to be criticised as one-dimensional, flat and stereotypical; however: “Die Typisierung der Gestalten ist selbst ein Hinweis auf das Typische, Wesenhafte der Aussage“ (Drewermann FH 42). What seems like a flaw on first sight is actually a crucial defining point of what the fairy tale intends to do – express the universal, the general, rather than the specific and individual. Bettelheim also acknowledges this when he writes:

Es ist charakteristisch für das Märchen, daß es ein existentielles Dilemma kurz und pointiert feststellt. [...] Das Märchen vereinfacht alle Situationen. Seine Gestalten sind klar gezeichnet; Einzelheiten werden nur erzählt, wenn sie sehr wichtig sind. Die Charaktere sind nicht einmalig, sondern typisch. (14)

These characteristics are, therefore, not a flaw to the genre but a specific means of communicating the essential messages.

1.4.3 The resolution of a problem with a (magical) quest
In addition to the central position that the fantastic takes in fairy tales, Jones names “the confronting and resolving of a problem, frequently by the undertaking of a quest“ (14). In his well known work The hero with a thousand faces, Campbell proposes a model of the hero's quest that he claims to be
universal to all heroic stories, be it myth, fairy tale or other comparable narrations – the so called monomyth.

Not unlike Jung himself, who studied “primitive” cultures to a certain extent, “Campbell was equipped with a comparative anthropological orientation that […] informs the model”, for example “borrowing components of the rite of passage formula” (Quinn 5). Campbell relies heavily on Jungian theories of the unconscious, of individuation and archetypes; Quinn states that Campbell's “model is largely grounded in Jungian thought” (4).

Campbell portrayed the monomythic quest in great detail, referring to several different text types (myths, legend, religious texts) as well as lived practice, mainly rituals and ceremonies as exercised in archaic societies. He describes “a pattern of separation (call to adventure, threshold crossing), initiation (confrontation with the antagonist, divinity), and return (return crossing and reincorporation into the community)” (Jones 15), which can easily be identified in fairy tale narrations as well.

1.4.4 The lack of an emotional inner world

I want to emphasize the wide agreement among scholars regarding the inherent necessity of fairy tales to feature “simple, one-dimensional” characters, a characteristic that added to its unjust reputation as primitive and unsophisticated. However, this is exactly what it is supposed to be – simple, plain, without any distractions.

„Wie streng und konzentriert die literarische Eigenform des Märchens ist, knapp, objektiv, ganz ohne private Gefühlswallungen, das hat Lüthi deutlich herausgearbeitet“ (Stumpfe 14). Lüthi is not the only one to remark on this important characteristic; Bühler, too, describes it:

Auch emotionale Erlebnisse werden gern durch ihre objektiven Kennzeichen fixiert. Sie werden nicht beschrieben, nicht genannt, sondern in Handlungen, Ausdrucksbewegungen vorgeführt. […] Überall verweist diese Darstellungstechnik den Hörer auf die Außenwelt, die er schaut. Diese ist der Schauplatz alles Geschehens. (61)
Fairy tale characters are hardly ever described as shocked, fearful, doubting, or as joyous, excited, happy – emotions and relationships are expressed by their actions and interactions. For example, fairy tales don’t spend any time and space on describing the prince’s feeling for the princess – he goes and rescues her, and from this action we deduct the motivating feeling. Spring even calls “[das] Fehlen einer Innenwelt unerlässlich“ (69). He insists this to be necessary for recipients of fairy tales to identify easily and to enable a characterization via action rather than description (Spring 69).

The vital importance of action is also stressed by Max Lüthi: “Das europäische Märchen ist handlungsfreudig. Es neigt zu raschem Fortschreiten und zu knapper Benennung der Figuren.” He also mentions a structural feature, namely that there is only one strand to the plot. (Lüthi in Spring 67) This is yet another way in which simplicity serves the purpose of clarity.

1.4.5 The kind of protagonist

As mentioned above, the kind of protagonist is important in differentiating between the neighbouring genres, with gods and heroes portrayed in myth, for example. When it comes to fairy tale protagonists, they “frequently seem to be young people, engaged as a rule in the process of a [sic] finding a mate” (Jones 17). Jones describes how many fairy tales are about the various fears of either small children or young adults:

The common psychological problems dramatized in fairy tales that concern the child’s relationship to parents and other family members include feelings of rejection (separation anxiety), oppression (authoritarian or tyrannical anxieties), or jealousy (oedipal or sibling rivalry). In relation to prospective mates, the main issue dramatized appears to concern sexual anxiety. [...] These issues seem to be of immediate and direct concern to young people who are still in the process of defining themselves. (Jones 20)

Jones acknowledges that fairy tales can be sorted into groups according to their relevance for either young children, for adolescents (the biggest group, dealing with leaving the family, finding a mate and establishing a new home (24)) and
also a smaller number for adults; they can be easily recognized by the protagonists' own age (22).

1.4.6 The happy ending
A final characteristic that “may be regarded as […] definitional feature”, is the inevitable happy ending, according to Jones (17). And certainly, the phrase “happily ever after” is as much a safe indicator of the genre as is the usual “once upon a time” in the beginning. Bettelheim refers to Tolkien when he talks about the importance of the happy ending:

Das gute Ende müssen nach Tolkien alle vollständigen Märchen haben. […] [Wenn ein Kind eine] Geschichte ohne einen solchen ermutigenden Schluss hört, hat es das Gefühl, es habe tatsächlich keine Hoffnung, sich aus den verzweifelten Lagen seines Lebens zu befreien. (Bettelheim 136)

As we will hear later in the paper, providing (abstract) guidelines on how to deal with difficulties and obstacles in life is one of the main functions of fairy tales, and a positive final resolution is necessary to give hope. Bettelheim stresses that the child is never mislead into believing that the hero and heroine will indeed live forever, but instead that it is possible to find “was allein den Stachel aus der engen Begrenzung unserer Lebenszeit zu nehmen vermag: eine echte Bindung an einen anderen Menschen” (16).

There are at least two messages conveyed by becoming a happily married royal couple: Firstly „deutet das Kind die Aussage, eine Figur des Märchens sei König oder Königin geworden, als Besitz der Reife des Erwachsenen“ (Bettelheim 122). The phase of being a prince or princess is over, the main character has matured into a proper adult. In addition to the “Persönlichkeitsintegration“, the „gelungene Harmonisierung der bislang auseinanderstrebenden Tendenzen des männlichen und des weiblichen Prinzips“, the marriage also stands for, secondly, “die dauerhafte menschliche Beziehung” (Bettelheim 138). Marriage „ist ein Symbol für das, was die Reife mit sich bringt: nicht nur Harmonie mit sich selbst, sondern auch mit dem anderen“ (Bettelheim 223).
Bettelheim traces back the importance of a lasting relationship for the psyche of the child, but also the adult, to one of our most basic fears – separation anxiety. According to him, psychoanalysis determined Trennungsangst as “[die] größte Furcht des Menschen” (Bettelheim 137). Fairy tales, with their hope-inspiring function, show „daß man durch echte zwischenmenschliche Beziehungen der Trennungsangst entgeht, […] die den Ausgangspunkt vieler Märchen abgibt, am Ende aber stets aufgehoben wird“ (Bettelheim 16).

„Die bleibende Verbindung eines Königssohns und einer Königstochter symbolisiert […] Trennungsangst für immer überwunden“ (138), and Bettelheim adds that the child – or perhaps the adult, as well – needs this „tröstend[e] Gewissheit […] heute mehr noch als früher“ (16).

1.5 (Modern) Fantasy Fiction

Similarities between fairy tale and modern fantasy fiction (Fantasy) are as numerous as they are obvious; especially the main characteristic of fairy tales, the incorporation of the fantastic as “real” and the expected suspension of disbelief are shared characteristics. Also central to virtually any work of Fantasy is the resolution of a problem with a quest, as well as the happy ending.

The existing differences seem to be rooted, amongst others, in the fact that Fantasy novels are written pieces of literature; the often extensive size of narrations would just not have been possible to thrive in oral history in the same way that shorter stories with more easily memorable plotlines did. Also, Fantasy writings have specific individual authors that can be clearly assigned, in contrast to the manifold forms of stories told and retold over centuries.

Modern Fantasy characters are certainly more complex than fairy tale heroes, but much less so than the protagonists of other modern fiction. They show some indications of an inner life, with varying complexity and depth; the specific
charm of modern Fantasy, however, does not lie within these rudimentary introspective aspects, but in the typical symbols, plots and motifs familiar from fairy tales and other fantastic fiction.

Despite the obvious differences I am therefore prone to argue that modern Fantasy can be seen as a rightful heir to the immense and diverse heritage of myth, legend and fairy tale, which may also account, in part, for its renewed popularity in an age where the mythical and legendary have become obscure and unfamiliar to man, mere memories of the way humans used to (mis-)interpret their world.

2 Multiplicity of approaches
Fairy tales have been approached by scientists of all kinds of areas of expertise, which has been acknowledged by many authors:

Märchen können sehr verschieden interpretiert werden. Es gibt eine germanistische, eine volkskundliche, eine soziologische, eine psychologische Märcheninterpretation. [...] Je nachdem, von welchem Blickpunkt man ausgeht, wird man etwas anderes als wichtig am Märchen erachten. (Kast MuF 9)

Auch von der Wissenschaftsseite her kann man auf verschiedene Art herankommen: als Volkskundler, der literarisches und brauchtümliches Material des seelischen und geistigen Lebensraums eines bestimmten Volkes registriert und mit anderen Räumen vergleicht; als Historiker, der die verschiedenen Stufen kultur- und bewusstseinsgeschichtlicher Ausdrucksversion abgrenzt; schließlich als Psychologe, der das Funktionsgefüge der Einzelseele registriert, das Typische herausucht, es bei den verschiedenen Völkertypen vergleicht. (Stumpfe 7)

Jones provides a very good overview of approaches and respective studies in the bibliographic essay added to his book The Fairy Tale. He surveys achievements in the two categories “classification” of fairy tales, and their “interpretation”. Jones names the famous Grimm brothers’ collection (1812-1815) as very first systematic effort to compile and categorize fairy tales. The original consists of 211 texts and was expanded, within the following 30 years, to comprise six additional editions. (119)
2.1 Attempts regarding Classification

Prior to the Grimm’s collection, fairy tales have often been translated or edited without paying attention to the original’s characteristics; changes were not marked in footnotes the way one would expect for editorial changes. Only slowly has the modern science of ethnology influenced the taking down of stories, with the rule that disagreements, contradictions and missing pieces are to be left alone as characteristics and not tempered with (von Franz PM 87).

The Grimm collection became the foundation of many researchers’ work, for example Antti Aarne’s Verzeichnis der Märchentypen, in which he grouped tales “by their primary action traits” (Jones 120). This was later expanded by Stith Thompson, who compiled a catalog of 450 so-called ‘tale types’ for fairy tales; he established these types by identifying the most basic common plot structure of various versions and subsuming them as one type:

There is no such thing as plagiarism in oral tradition. [...] Instead, a fairy tale is defined as the sum of its versions. From the coinciding events or episodes in texts that apparently tell the same basic story, a plot outline for that tale is deduced. That plot outline is used to define [...] a discrete tale type. (Jones 4)

Similar stories with the same basic plot are considered versions rather than individual stories; Jones mentions how Johannes Bolte and Georg Polivka’s have attempted to enrich the Grimm collection with different versions of the same tale type (120).

One important aspect for classification is the fact that the same motif or arrangement of motifs does not necessarily mean that the same tale type is represented: “Many of the stylistic features – or motifs – of the tales, which include the characters, settings, objects, and other descriptive details as well as the rhetorical formulas, can and do reappear in a variety of tale types” (Jones 4). There are, for example, several tale types in which death-like sleep plays a central role (for example Sleeping Beauty and Snow White); still, the plots and story lines are very different and therefore the narrations are not to be
considered versions of each other but different stories employing the same motifs.

Jones differentiates two major approaches in fairy tale classification: the historic-geographic school, and the structural approach. The historic-geographic school tries to document as many versions of a tale as possible in order to then “trace its historical and geographical development” which is assumed to progress like “the ripples of a stone thrown into a pond” (Jones 121f). Von Franz also mentions this phase in her short account of the history of fairy tales and adds that transference of stories and motifs from one culture to another was the leading theory accounting for their likeness only because a theory of the Collective Unconscious was not yet established (PM 96).

The alternative to an historic-geographic view is the structural approach. Its most prominent agent is certainly Vladimir Propp, who attempted to identify the most basic structures of narratives and the functions of their main characters. His “Procrustean reduction” (Jones 124) went as far as to proclaim that there is in fact only one single plot outline covering all fairy tales. This is reminiscent of Joseph Campbell’s monomyth, as described above. Another scholar to observe uniform patterns, as early as 1871, was Edward Tylor (Quinn 3).

Jones also commends the work of Alexandr Nikiforov, a colleague of Propp’s who was involved in his research and who published, even before Propp, a “more sophisticated” version of Propp’s approach that “more logically identifies a number of basic tale outlines” (124). Jones regrets that this work has not been given the deserved attention because it failed to be translated into English until 1973.

### 2.2 Attempts regarding Interpretation

Fairy tales, like myths, have always been the subject of diverse interpretation. In contrast to, for example, animal fables, their meaning is much less obvious, and many argue that the deepest levels of significance can never be even touched, let alone drawn to light for a rational consciousness to analyze fully. As Jung
puts it, “[e]very interpretation necessarily remains an ‘as-if’. The ultimate core of meaning may be circumscribed, but not described” (Jung JOM 9).

For some time, it has been popular to view fairy tales as “broken down myths”, meaning that they were seen as impoverished versions of mythological tales. A related school theorized that the original myths that turned into fairy tales dealt, in essence, with nature and especially the solar cycle (Jones 126). This is described in more detail by Eugen Drewermann:

“Die alte naturmythologische Schule dachte noch bis zur Jahrhundertwende, die Mythen seien ursprünglich nichts anderes als Naturbeschreibungen; sie seien durchaus unsymbolisch, also möglichst buchstabengetreu und wörtlich zu verstehen; als bloße Appellative der Naturerscheinungen seien sie nicht einmal religiösen Inhaltes, sondern nur der Ausdruck einer bestimmten (falschen) Naturbetrachtung; so z.B. I. Goldziher. [...] In solcher Betrachtung sind die Mythen selbststredend nur noch von rein historischem Interesse, ein Arsenal der Irrungen menschlichen Geistes.” (Drewermann FH 48)

The “broken down myth” theory is also reflected by von Franz, who exemplifies this notion with Greek fairy tales that include lots of motifs that can also be found in the Odyssey. Myth, she argues, has a more national character, is more embedded in local culture, and has been artfully and consciously phrased and reworked by poets and/or priests with the intention to root them in their society, often combined with (religious) ritual. This makes them look more impressive and suggests that less well-phrased fairy tales are mere remains; but at the same time, myths lose some of their generality, their universal validity (von Franz PM 201-203).

The approach described above, which basically took fairy tale and myth at face value, has made room for other, more sophisticated approaches to get to the bottom of fantastic narrations. Jones differentiates four major schools when it comes to the interpretation of fairy tales: the anthropological approach, the structural approach, socio-historical and feminist approaches, and finally, psychological interpretation.
2.2.1 The anthropological approach

The anthropological approach takes into focus the function that certain stories, and the telling of these stories, have for the society which employs the telling. It deals with “the way primitive culture used its traditions, including literature” (Jones 127).

There are hence great overlaps with religion: “[A] great number of critics interpret literary creations in a perspective borrowed from the historians of religions. Myth, ritual, initiation, heroes, ritual death, regeneration, rebirth, etc., belong now to the basic terminology of literary exegesis” (Eliade Quest 124). Indeed, all of these motifs originally found in anthropological studies can also be applied fruitfully to the interpretation of texts, especially fantastic fiction such as fairy tales.

2.2.2 The structural approach

The structural approach tries “to see what patterns or structures, what social or epistemological paradigms” the examined narrations convey (Jones 132). General patterns are searched for and comparisons made between texts within one genre, but also across genre limitations, up to a point where Campbell, for example, established his theory of the monomyth, suggesting “that a wide variety of fairy tales, myths, and religious narratives all share […] a single plot outline” (Jones 132).

The monomyth is a good example of how genre definition and boundaries between text types are very flexible, depending on whether one looks for similarities or focuses on differences. On the one hand, there is (over-)generalization up to a point where everything is like everything else; on the other hand, we find academic “nit-picking” that tries to account for every minute digression from a pattern with such emphasis that the level of differentiation hardly allows for the establishment of classes/groups at all. In his introduction to Jung on Mythology, Segal notices how “[b]y nature, all theorists of myth, not just Jung, are interested in the similarities rather than the differences among myths”
(JoM 12). Jung, Campbell, Eliade, von Franz and Kast are only a few of the theorists whose focus is definitely set towards similarities and generalisation.

Since a focus on similarities is also the approach that this paper will take, let me meet a common criticism in advance: many scholars have disapproved of Jungian/archetypal readings as reductive because of their focus on common structures (and implied neglect of differences). Quinn, however, notes how “such viewpoints disregard fundamental facts of human experience that demonstrate quite conclusively how ‘reduced’ our varieties of experience really are. The quest is one such least common denominator in the experiential world of man – psychological or physical” (5). Human experience is in fact limited through many factors, from our physical setup to our perception and processing of information as well as inner workings of thought and feeling. It is not necessarily an artificial reduction, then, to highlight the basic common denominators.

Jones mentions Arnold van Gennep and his theories as presented in The Rites of Passage, as well as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Alan Dundes as further representatives of the structural approach. “The structural approach looks for patterns first, and then draws connections to the social issues and personal concerns that might link these tales to their audiences” (Jones 132), which differentiates it from the anthropological approach that first and foremost regards the harboring society and its connection to the text rather than the text and its structure.

2.2.3 Socio-historical and feminist approaches
Socio-historical or sociological approaches try to link narrations as they are currently spread in a specific society to the value system of that society. They are seen “as reflections of (as well as promulgators of) cultural norms” (Jones 133). These approaches are very similar to the anthropological approach with their focus on cultural context; however, they do not restrict themselves to primitive societies but examine the function of narrations in any (modern) society (Jones 134).
One increasing problem in the globalised world is “determining the appropriate cultural context for a tale” (134), since tales have always been crossing cultural boundaries and do so even more today. Another problematic or at least particular aspect is the question of agenda. As Jones mentions, stories are not just seen as reflections but also as promulgators of norms, which immediately spikes the question which norms and values should be perpetrated, and which should not.

Vladimir Propp, best known as a structuralist, has in later years also worked on “placing [fairy] tales in a social and historical context, evaluating their inculcation of cultural belief systems” (Jones 134) which is why Jones also names him in this rubric, continuing that Propp’s famous Morphology of the Folktale was intended only as a “first step to a thorough methodology that moves from synchronic, stylistic, and descriptive analysis to diachronic and ethnographic analysis” (134).

Feminist readings of classic fairy tales have elicited much debate; Jones especially highlights Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, for example their reading of Snow White as passive object to be desired and Cap o’ Rushes as perpetuation of patriarchal social structures through marriage (Jones 136).

Von Franz rejects the modern feminist and sociological approaches, “weil sie aus ideologischem Vorurteil oder aus Ressentiment die Grundtatsachen verzerren” (von Franz PM 205). It seems strange, on first sight, that she would object so strongly to a specific reading after emphasizing again and again that there are innumerable possible interpretations with various aspects being pushed to the fore- or background. Moreover, Jung’s approach, which she follows, could just as well be termed an ideology.

Then again, one can see why she would be especially dissatisfied with interpretations that heavily rely on the mere surface and first-glance-appearance of a tale. It must be frustrating when, after decades of work on what the motif of being a king’s daughter can mean, other scholars restrict
themselves to criticizing that the exposure of girls to princess-stories make them girlish, passive, etc.

2.2.4 Psychological approaches
There is a long and rich tradition of interpretations for fairy tales, myth and other highly symbolic kinds of tales from all brands of schools belonging to depth psychology, i.e. classic Freudian Psychoanalysis, Jungian Analytic Psychology, Adler’s Individual Psychology, and more modern approaches like object-relations theory.

Works such as Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* have contributed to the application of the concept of the Unconscious to “the fields of religion, prehistory, mythology and folklore, literature and the history of art”, which Campbell calls “one of the outstanding factors in the development of twentieth-century thought” (16); yet he argues that the “profound and natural sympathy between the two spheres of literature and the science of the unconscious had for a long time existed unperceived”, and that “the modern science of the unconscious no more than writes the *quod erat demonstrandum* to the whole great tradition of metaphysical and psychological insights, represented by the romantic poets, poet-philosophers, and artists” (16). Campbell names Goethe’s Faust and Wagner’s opus as examples of the “force of traditional symbolism” employed by remarkable artists to express profound ideas (17).

Jones names Freud, Jung, Campbell and Bettelheim as central figures of psychological fairy tale interpretations, in which symbol and exaggeration are used to illustrate the listener’s personal concerns, and possible solutions to them (xii).

As commonly known, Freud considered dreams the main access to the unconscious, the *via regia*. It is only a small step from dream to fairy tale, or, as Freud suggested it, the other way around: He presumed that “the imagery and content of fairy tales was drawn directly from the dreams and unconscious minds of audiences” (Jones 127). Jung not only agrees with him in this respect but considers it the obvious explanation for the high level of similarity between
myths, fairy tales and other fantastic fiction all over the world: Jung “repeatedly declares myth to be not merely similar but outright identical – an identity that he attributes to their identical origin” (Segal JOM 12). This identical origin is the so called Collective Unconscious, i.e. an unconscious common to all mankind, of which we shall hear more in a later chapter.

Jones mentions Erich Fromm’s analysis of the language of fairy tales, and Bruno Bettelheim’s focus on how “many popular fairy tales might symbolically depict emotional anxieties experienced by children” (Jones 128) and how working through them on a symbolic level can help children develop psychologically. A “seminal figure in the psychological analysis of fairy tales” (Jones 128), however, was Jung. His extensive work on the symbolic imagery used for “journeying into [ones] own unconscious to confront the psychological conflicts there” (Jones 129) is certainly one of the most elaborated models for a psychological approach to fairy tales, which is why it was chosen to be depicted in more detail in this paper (see chapter 4).

Working from Jung’s model is Marie-Louise von Franz with her numerous books, and Campbell’s The hero with a thousand faces is also in debt to Jung since it “adopts Jung’s concept of the exploration of the unconscious by fairy tale protagonists” (Jones 129f). Max Lüthi also sides with Jung when he stresses how the abstract style of the fairy tale strengthens its symbolic nature; the audience always perceives the pictures presented in stories as metaphors for the invisible inner world: “What is unconscious and ineffable finds visible expression in them” (Lüthi in Jones 130).

### 2.3 Object- and subject-level interpretations

Eugen Drewermann emphasizes the importance of differentiating between the object- and subject-level when approaching to interpret a fairy tale. On the object-level, characters such as mother, siblings, (potential) mate etc. are interpreted as separate individual entities, whereas on the subject-level, every figure in the story represents different impulses and tendencies within one single person (or personality). Both views are, of course, valid, and to switch
between them can even enrich or complete the impression gained from the other, but one always has to stay aware of which level is currently used for interpretation (Drewermann MoH 44).

Drewermann meets a common criticism regarding fairy tales when he says: “[W]as in Romanen oder Filmdrehbüchern mit Recht als primitiv oder gar zu simpel gelten mag, erscheint doch in einem anderen Licht, wenn man den Gegensatz [der Charaktere] nicht psychologisch als Beschreibung einzelner menschlicher Personen […] [versteht]“ (FH 24) but as contradictory parts of one person/personality. Fairy tales indeed seem simplistic when compared to novels with complex characters interacting in sophisticated patterns of relationships. But this is not the only, or main way in which they are supposed to be read.

James Hillman, a successor of Jung’s and founder of Archetypal Psychology, expresses a similar view with regards to myth interpretation. He calls to “fall into an identity with one of the figures in the tale” ego fallacy:

[T]he whole myth is pertinent and all its mythical figures relevant: by deceiving I am also being deceived, and being devoured, and stolen from, as well as all the other complication in each of these takes. It is egoistic to recognize oneself in only one portion of a tale, cast in only one role. (Hillman in Jung JOM 261f)

All roles are significant; all characters can be identified with to some degree since all characteristics represented are part of the enormous spectrum of human experience and emotion. “[T]o identify oneself with a single character in a myth [or fairy tale] is to assume the unitary perspective”, or view the text from an object-level. “Rather, one must imagine oneself as all of the characters in the situation” (Segal in Jung JOM 256). Kast, too, expresses this view: It is necessary “die ‘subjektstufige’ Deutungsform […] mitzuverwenden. Jede Figur, die auftritt, kann auch als Persönlichkeitszug […] der Heldenfigur aufgefasst werden (MuF 7).
2.4 Shifts over time

The multiplicity of interpretations is not only a question of various views and schools, but can also be seen as a temporal phenomenon; every approach has its five minutes of fame, is praised as the final say in a long discussion, the long expected enlightening insight – until a new one becomes en vogue and questions, doubts, ridicules and maybe even shatters the former. Later scholars “werden eine neue Interpretation liefern, und unsere wird als eine der veralteten Interpretationen gelten – eine Illustration dessen, wie solches Material zu jener Zeit betrachtet wurde” (von Franz PM 36).

To take an example, Marxism today seems to be one of the formerly highly praised, revolutionary ideas that, when used to analyze social, political or literary contexts today, yields no more than a condescending smile for the poor soul viewing today’s world through yesterday’s glasses. This thesis’ approach, too, could be seen as an example for the use of concepts that may seem “passé” to the poststructuralist, postmodernist, post-everything reader; nonetheless, it is a valid way of thinking, conceiving, and making sense, and it wants to be explored.

As von Franz puts it, we interpret for the same reason for which we tell stories in the first place: “Interpretation ist unsere Weise, Geschichten zu erzählen:

Wir haben immer noch dasselbe Verlangen [...] nach der Erneuerung, die aus dem Verstehen archetypischer Bilder kommt. Wir wissen recht gut, daß es nur unser Mythos ist. Wir erklären ein X durch ein Y, weil bei uns jetzt Y zu klicken scheint. Eines Tages wird das nicht mehr der Fall sein, und es wird das Bedürfnis nach einem Z [...] bestehen. (PM 36)

In any case, von Franz ascribes to the interpretation of (fairy) tales „eine belebende Wirkung […] und eine befriedigende Reaktion […], eine friedliche Beziehung zu seinem eigenen unbewussten Instinktuntergrund” (PM 36), which does not have to be means to yet another end but has merit in itself.
3 Meaning and function of the Fairy tale

Scholars throughout the fields agree that fairy tales and similar fantastic narrations are vital to human beings, on a social as well as personal level. Their meaning is very hard to come by, a fact which we shall have a closer look at in the next subchapter; yet their functions and benefits are manifold.

3.1 Illusiveness of meaning

Literary (or cultural, or any) interpretation is always a tricky business; the world is complex, and making sense of even just parts of it is hard work with no definitive answers or explanations in the end. Every interpretation remains an approximation, omitting some of the original, adding something else.

The matter of this paper, however, is particularly hard to grasp. There are at least three areas which make interpretation particularly hard: the nature of the subject matter, the excessive use of imagery and symbolism, and the human factor.

3.1.1 The nature of the subject matter

Concepts such as the unconscious, individual or collective, cannot be clearly and easily argued for, since “being the unknown” is part of their very nature:

Because the collective unconscious is inherently unconscious, in the last analysis, therefore, it is impossible to say what [its contents] refer to. Every interpretation necessarily remains an ‘as-if’. The ultimate core of meaning may be circumscribed, but not described. (Jung JOM 9)

Jacobi stresses how „die oft unüberwindliche Schwierigkeit, Erschautes und Erfahrenes in eine begriffliche Sprache überzuführen“ challenges attempts in interpretation; „[e]s geht ja dabei um die sprachliche Fassung und Vermittlung von Tatbeständen, die schon ihrem Wesen nach solchem Bemühen nur schwer zugänglich sind. Dies kann nicht oft genug betont werden“ (Jacobi 89).

When it comes to fairy tales, myths, dreams and similar entities, many interpreters even argue that interpretation taints their direct authentic impact.
Hillman is one of the scholars who stress the importance of immediate experience:

> Damit ein Traumbild im Leben wirken kann, muss es wie ein Mysterium als völlig wirklich erfahren werden. Interpretation erfolgt, wenn wir den Kontakt mit den Bildern verloren haben, wenn ihre Realität abgeleitet ist und erst durch Übersetzung in Begriffe wiedergewonnen werden muss. Dann versuchen wir, ihre Weisheit durch unsere Intelligenz zu ersetzen. (Hillman 115)

What Hillman says about dreams can easily be adapted to fairy tales and myths: He claims that their lack of clarity is caused by their “inner polytheism”; every scene, character and image is full of the tension of “vielfältiger Entsprechungen und endloser Möglichkeiten, denn der Traum ist die Seele; und die Seele, sagt Heraklit, ist endlos” (Hillman 118). The project of interpreting this unlimited multivalent phenomenon – dream, story, soul – can, for obvious reasons, never be undertaken and completed to full satisfaction.

### 3.1.2 Symbolism

If anything about fairy tales and other fantastic narration is undisputed, it is the central importance these kinds of text give to the use and interpretation of symbols: “Allgemein herrscht Übereinstimmung darin, daß Sagen und Märchen in der Sprache von Symbolen, die für unbewusste Inhalte stehen, zu uns reden. Sie sprechen gleichzeitig unser Bewusstes und unser Unbewusstes […] an” (Bettelheim 39).

But what are symbols, in essence? The concept is as wide-spread as it is illusive in its use and meaning:

> Es gibt aber kaum ein Gebiet des Geistes, sei es Mythologie, Philosophie, Kunst, Technik, Medizin oder Psychologie, wo das Wort Symbol keine Verwendung erfahren hätte […]. Trotzdem existiert eigentlich noch kein richtiges, modernes, umfassendes Werk, in welchem man mit Gewinn seinem Wesen und Sinn nachgehen könnte, und vor allem noch keines, in welchem seine tiefenpsychologische Bedeutung untersucht würde. Die Forschungen Jungs sind auch in dieser Richtung Pionierarbeit. (Jacobi 91f)
Symbols, and the ability to form and understand them, are typically human and most likely as old as humankind; Stumpfe emphasizes how the language of images („Bildsprache“) has been a primary means of communication as well as basic relation to the world throughout thousands of years of human prehistory (19f). Eliade agrees that the symbol, “als eine Schöpfung der menschlichen Psyche”, has accompanied us “von Anbeginn an” (EBS 224), and continues:

Das Symboldenken [...] gehört wesentlich zum Menschsein: es ist der Vorläufer der Sprache und des diskursiven Denkens. Das Symbol enthüllt ganz bestimmte Ansichten der Wirklichkeit [...], die sich allen anderen Hilfsmitteln des Erkennens widersetzen. [...] [S]ie erfüllen eine Funktion: nämlich die geheimsten Strukturformen des Daseins bloßzulegen. (EBS 12)

Stumpfe compares the „Fähigkeit, aus den sichtbaren Gestalten die ‚Ausdrücke, Werkzeuge‘ der Ideen ‚herauszusehen‘“, to what Goethe called „anschauende Urteilskraft“ in his scientific studies - „die Fähigkeit, von der Erscheinung auf die Idee zu schließen“ (12). This ability forms the basis of every symbolic language and is „Hilfsmittel einer Sinn-Aussage, die ohne dies Hilfsmittel gar nicht oder allzu oft nur in Gefahr der Abstraktionen, des Verlustes der ganzen Wirklichkeit, geschähe“ (Stumpfe 12). Jung agrees with this view when he says: „Anschaulich, deutlich und unmissverständlich ist nur das Bild selbst“ (AT&KU 199) and Eliade, too, claims that symbols are used to relate a reality that is “für sonstige Hilfsmittel des Erkennens nicht erreichbar“ (EBS 224). Kast reminds us of the positive aspect related to the problem of interpreting symbols; she calls them „für unser Bedürfnis nach Eindeutigkeit ein Ärgernis, für unser Bedürfnis nach Geheimnis und Sinnfülle allerdings eine Fundgrube“ (28).

The use and reuse of certain character types, places or typical situations creates, in addition, the effect of a palimpsest; the reader or listener not only perceives the text per se, but every experience with the genre, every encounter with, for example, a dragon, shines through and influences the current reading. I dare say there is nobody who does not have some kind of association with a dragon, and all of these memories and connected thoughts and feelings play into the way a current specimen is perceived. Verena Kast summarizes this fact nicely when she writes:
Eliade agrees on the intricacy of images and stresses that the image is true in all its aspects: “So ist also doch das Bild, an und für sich, sofern es eine Bündelung von Bedeutungen darstellt, wahr, und nicht nur eine einzelne unter den zahlreichen Bedeutungen und Beziehungsebenen des Bildes!” (EBS 16f, italics original) Similar to Hillman before, he continues that reducing a picture to „konkrete Begriffsprache […] ist ein verderblich[es] Beginnen.“ (EBS 16f) Only the image can express the meaning „[ohne] jede Reduktion, die ausschließlich einengt, ein Irrweg [ist]” (EBS 17).

The multiplicity of meaning in its images is also how texts as short and simple as fairy tales can spur volumes of works interpreting one single aspect; the use of images and symbols makes these stories extremely dense. Hillman names a few processes, in dependence on Freud, that form the equally dense world of dreams:

Träume entstehen in einem Gerinnungsprozess: Verdichtung, Intensivierung (Überdeterminiertheit), Reduktion (Verkürzung), Wiederholung, Konkretisierung. […] Diese Traum-,Dinge’ nennen wir ‚Symbole‘. Sie erscheinen als Verdichtungen, und das Wort ‚dicht‘ […] taucht auf in ‚Verdichtung‘ (Freuds Begriff). (125)

Reduction or abstraction has already been discussed as one of the main features of fairy tales, and the other processes are equally likely to have played a major role in the formation of fairy tales.

3.1.3 The human factor

Von Franz mentions how psychology has a special situation within the academic fields: Science is characterized by objectivity and facts; however, psychology, as the science of feelings (among other things), cannot and must not eliminate this factor, which is the core of its dealings. She points out how
Jung already saw the danger of leaving feeling behind in favour of scientific strictness and clarity (von Franz PM 14). Their emotional value and impact, however, are what gives fairy tales and other fantastic fiction their power and meaning.

Von Franz uses the example of modern physics, where the observer’s influence on an experiment’s outcome has by now been acknowledged (no matter how confusing this fact still is) and hopes that the observer’s emotionality will be acknowledged as “die menschliche Grundlage, aus der solche [Märchen-]Motive entstehen” (von Franz PM 16) rather than dismissed as sentiment (von Franz PM 15).

A similar line of reasoning can be found with Stumpfe, who also acknowledges the problems connected to imagery and the human factor, but argues that they are factors that can be worked with productively:

Mit der Notwendigkeit des ‚Heraussehens‘ des Symbolon ist in Psychologie- und Symbolforschung ein Unsicherheitsfaktor hineingegeben, der sie aber nicht unmöglich macht. Auch die Mathematik hat lernen müssen, mit dem ‚A-Logon‘ und der ‚irrationalen Zahl‘ zusammen zu leben, und die moderne Physik hat gelernt, den Faktor ‚Subjekt‘ mit einzubeziehen. (Stumpfe 12f)

Stumpfe does not regard this as a reason to abandon the whole task but argues that scientific work should nonetheless be possible: „Die sensibilisierte kombinatorische Intelligenz – also die führend Zusammenhänge ertastende Klugheit – muss als dynamischer Faktor, als Bewegungskraft in den Wissenschaftsbegriff der Symbolforschung mit einbezogen werden“ (12f). Perhaps our human skill for intuition can turn from an obstacle to scientific quality into a resource for research and theorizing.

### 3.2 Functions of fantastic narration

In the following section, I have tried to group together some of the main functions that various authors attribute to fantastic narration, from myth and fairy tale to modern Fantasy.
3.2.1 Guidelines for problem solving

In Jung on Myth, the editor Segal clusters Jung’s texts on the function of myth into five categories, one of which is providing models of behaviour by giving examples of the hero’s struggles and his successful overcoming of hindrances (85ff).

Eliade has also called fairy tales and myths “Vorbilder des menschlichen Verhaltens, die gerade in dieser Eigenschaft dem Leben Sinn und Wert geben” (in Bettelheim 38), and Kast agrees when she writes: „In der Jungschen Schule betrachten wir die Märchen als symbolische Darstellungen von allgemeinmenschlichen Problemen und von möglichen Lösungen dieser Probleme. […] Wir betrachten den Helden gleichsam als Modellfigur“ (MuF 7).

Exactly because they are abstract and general, fairy tales can reflect universal processes experienced by all individuals at any time and in various cultures; for example, separation from the parents or finding a mate. The similarities between myths’ and folktales’ imagery and symbols can be traced back to the fact that they have been formed “vom Bewusstsein nicht eines bestimmten Menschen, sondern vieler Menschen, die darin übereinstimmen, was sie als universelle menschliche Probleme und als wünschenswerte Lösungen sehen” (Bettelheim 39).

Drewermann explains that fairy tales „fulfill themselves“ by solving the psychological problems they depict through symbolic processing in the course of the story; „in ihrer Darstellung enthalten sie so etwas wie ein therapeutisches Angebot zur Bewusstmachung und Durcharbeitung eigener Konflikte für jeden, der sie liest und sich in ihnen wiedererkennt“ (GM 275). Kast stresses the feeling of hope that is evoked by fairy tales:

Indem man persönliche Probleme auf kollektiv-archetypische Prozesse bezieht – wie sie z.B. in den Märchen abgebildet sind –, wird die Emotion der Hoffnung geweckt, Hoffnung darauf, daß die Probleme bewältigt werden können. Zudem werden auch Phantasien angeregt, […] die das Gefühl von mehr Autonomie, mehr Kompetenz in der Lebensbewältigung und mehr Sinnhaftigkeit vermitteln. (DdS 117)
Jung expresses, quite poetically, a similar notion when he invokes the collective dimension of archetypal imagery:

Wer mit Urbildern spricht, spricht wie mit tausend Stimmen [...]; er erhöht das persönliche Schicksal zum Schicksal der Menschheit, und dadurch löst er auch in uns alle jene hilfreichen Kräfte, die es der Menschheit je und je ermöglicht haben, sich aus aller Fährnis zu retten und auch die längste Nacht zu überdauern. (Jung in Kast DdS 117)

Our own everyday fights to simply get by and make some sense of our existence may seem petty and fruitless from time to time; the identification of these struggles, in their most basic form and structure, with heroic fights and successes heightens the importance of our own personal fights and provides hope.

3.2.2 Dealing with change/growth
One of the most basic struggles of human existence is the coming to terms with continuous change. All human development can be seen as a never-ending succession of changes; “death” of the child, the youth, the young adult one once was, as well as continuous rebirths in the next state of existence (adult, parent, elderly person).

A core theme to be found in every piece of myth or fairy tale is, in accordance with this, “der Tod eines alten, unzulänglichen Selbst, das auf einer höheren Daseinsebene wiedergeboren wird” (Bettelheim 38). Especially interpretations based on Jungian depth psychology emphasize that these stories symbolically represent the longing for and development towards a higher level of personal identity and inner renewal (Bettelheim 39).

These changes, however, do not take place easily and smoothly, but mark crises that can seriously impede an individual's well-being. Stumpfe points out the continuity of symbols in fairy tales and dreams that accompany these crises:

Bettelheim agrees when he writes that „[d]as Märchen in Phantasiegestalt darstellt, woraus der gesunde menschliche Wachstumsprozess besteht“ (17). It starts with resistance towards the parents and fear of becoming an adult and ends „wenn der jugendliche Mensch sich selbst gefunden und psychologische Unabhängigkeit und moralische Reife erlangt hat und das andere Geschlecht nicht mehr als bedrohlich oder dämonisch empfindet, sondern fähig ist, in eine positive Beziehung zu ihm zu treten“ (Bettelheim 17).

The fairy tale and neighbouring genres are especially valuable for children and their development for two reasons; firstly, they take the child’s emerging fears, for example when faced with change, serious:

Die tiefen inneren Konflikte, die aus unseren primitiven Trieben und unseren heftigen Emotionen entstehen, werden in den meisten modernen Kinderbüchern verschwiegen, so daß die Kinder von dort keine Hilfe zu ihrer Bewältigung erhalten. [...] Das Märchen dagegen nimmt diese existentiellen Ängste sehr Ernst und spricht sie unmittelbar aus. (Bettelheim 15)

Secondly, the child can „je nach den augenblicklichen Interessen und Bedürfnissen [...] dem gleichen Märchen unterschiedlichen Sinn [entnehmen]“ (Bettelheim 17). Fairy tales are, in their general and abstract form, not reduced to specific situations or age groups, and individual interpretations can change over time. Bettelheim put his focus on the development of children; however, further change is in store for the adult, of course, and Jung stresses this continuous development throughout life. For him, too, myths “serve to spur normal adults to recognize their unconscious and to integrate it with ego consciousness[;] they advance [...] psychological growth” (Segal JOM 27), growth that Jung observes until the very end of life.
3.2.3 Getting into touch with the unconscious

Two further functions that Jung ascribes to myth (as presented by Segal) lie in revealing the unconscious, which can only communicate indirectly, as well as in encountering it (JOM 85ff).

As far as the revealing is concerned, Jung strongly disagrees with Freud. While for Freud dreams (as well as myths) are a “compromise between the pleasure principle and the reality principle, for Jung myths and dreams are the outright expression of fantasy thinking, [...] unhamppered manifestation [...] rather than a defence [...]. Myth for Jung *is* the naked expression of the unconscious” (Segal JOM 25f).

Where Freud sees mechanisms of concealment at work to hinder clear insights, Jung detects a mere problem of interpretation; myth “intentionally seeks to reveal the unconscious [...] as clearly as possible. [...] It simply speaks its own distinct language: ‘My idea is that the dream does not conceal; we simply do not understand its language’” (Segal/Jung JOM 17).

In addition, myth and other fantastic fiction does not only try to convey contents of the unconscious, to give information, but it also offers an opportunity to experience it, with all its emotional impact: “[T]he symbol not only conveys a visualization of the process but – and this is perhaps just as important – it also brings a re-experiencing of it” (Segal JOM 18). The telling of fantastic fiction “causes the process to come alive again and be recollected, thereby re-establishing the connection between conscious and unconscious” (Segal JOM 18).

The re-connection of conscious and unconscious is, for Jung, more important today than it has ever been before. “[T]o be cut off from one’s own unconscious – a psychological disaster: In reality we can never legitimately cut loose from our archetypal foundations unless we are prepared to pay the price of a
neurosis.” We need to “connect the life of the past that still exists in us with the life of the present, which threatens to slip away from it” (Segal JOM 12).

3.2.4 Connection to the numinous

In his introduction to archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, Jung asks the reader why psychology is such a young science, given that the psyche, especially the unconscious, must have been here as long as we have:

Warum ist Psychologie wohl die allerjüngste der Erfahrungswissenschaften? Warum hat man das Unbewusste nicht schon längst entdeckt und seinen Schatz an ewigen Bildern gehoben? Ganz einfach darum nicht, weil wir eine religiöse Formel für alle Dinge der Seele hatten, die weit schöner und umfassender ist als unmittelbare Erfahrung. (Jung AT&KU 17)

Jung argues that religious beliefs, practices and texts used to help man keep in touch with the unconscious and even transcend to the numinous; with the increased secularization of modern Western society, this function is no longer fulfilled and a new focus is put on the psychological dimension of life. Jung repeatedly reminisces about the impoverishment of symbolism and the decreased importance of religion, which creates, in his view, a lack of meaningfulness in modern man’s spiritual life:

[A]lle Zeiten vor uns glaubten noch an Götter in irgendeiner Form. Es bedurfte schon einer beispiellosen Verarmung der Symbolik, um die Götter als psychische Faktoren, nämlich als Archetypen des Unbewussten wieder zu entdecken. [...] Seit die Sterne vom Himmel gefallen und unsere höchsten Symbole verblasst sind, herrscht geheimes Leben im Unbewussten. Deshalb haben wir heutzutage eine Psychologie, und deshalb reden wir vom Unbewussten. (Jung AT&KU 32f)

Hillman, too, supports the notion that psychology has taken over the explanatory function of myth and religion. He talks about “Austauschbarkeit von Mythologie und Psychologie“ (27); Greek and Roman myths, he continues, were speculative tales constructed to hint at man’s relationship to numinous forces (27). With the loss of myth and religion man has, according to Jung, “stripped all things of their mystery and numinosity” (MahS 76).
Psychology, however, is a science, and as such cannot completely fill the emotional and spiritual gap created in modern man’s life. Jung “asserts that the yearning for myth is so strong that it will always find fulfilment” (Segal JOM 210); the need for imagery, symbols and an impression of numinosity is a basic and strong one that will always find ways of expressing itself:

What happens to those figures and phantoms, those gods, demons, magicians, those messengers from heaven and monsters of the abyss, when we see that [...] the mysteries of faith have shrunk to articles in a creed? Even when we have corrected an illusion, it by no means follows that the psychic agency which produces illusions, and actually needs them, has been abolished. (Jung JOM 72)

The psychological forces represented and the needs catered to by ideas of gods, magic, monsters and such still remain present, even when they are found out to be “untrue” in a scientific sense. Gods are no longer real entities residing in a separate realm, meddling with human fate, but representations of ideas of transcendence, a means of expressing our desire for otherworldliness and forces superseding human capacity. Jung argues that not the metaphysical truth of such phenomena is relevant, but that their psychological truth has to be considered:

Man hat sich allzu lange bei der im Grunde unfruchtbaren Frage aufgehalten, ob die Behauptungen des religiösen Glaubens wahr seien oder nicht. [...] [D]as Vorhandensein der Behauptung [ist] eine an sich evidente Tatsache, die keines weiteren Beweises bedarf [...] . Erfassbar daran ist nur das psychische Phänomen, in Bezug auf welches die Kategorie der objektiven Richtigkeit oder Wahrheit inkommensurabel ist. (Jung Tdl 34)

The need for symbols and images as means of experiencing transcendence is evident simply through their existence, throughout human history and cultures. When religion or classic mythology are no longer the prominent means of a culture to fulfill these needs, other channels, such as “secular” literature and film, or arts in general, are used; this does not diminish the importance and impact of the forces at play: “Unterordnet sich von nun an auch die Dimension des Mythischen und des Archetypischen einer anderen Dimension [arts,
literature], so bleibt sie deshalb um keinen Deut weniger wirklich“ (Eliade EBS 202).

This dynamic may account for the great emotional impact fantastic fiction, from fairy tale to Fantasy, has on its readers; Campbell states that art has succeeded in creating signs that release psychological energies just as effectively as natural stimuli activate instincts (41), which also clarifies, in his view, “the difference between literary metaphor, which is addressed to the intellect, and mythology, which is aimed primarily at the […] innate releasing mechanisms of the whole person” (Campbell 48).

4 C. G. Jung’s analytic psychology

Carl Gustav Jung is known to most as belonging (exclusively) to the field of psychology; a highly promising protégé of Freud, part of his innermost circle, student, colleague and friend – until their discrepancies started to overbalance the relationship and Jung became the founder of a separate branch of depth psychology. This categorization implies that Jung, just as Freud, placed great importance on the significance of unconscious strivings and ambitions; however, he not only disagreed with Freud on the importance of the libido (which Freud insisted to be the most important drive, equalled only – perhaps – by the later added death drive); Jung also expanded the idea of the Unconscious to include not only personal repressed or never-aware urges, but postulated a collective dimension shared by all human beings.

Although Freud is, for good reasons, considered the father of psychoanalysis and discoverer of the unconscious, “myth originates in the Jungian rather than the Freudian mind” (Segal JOM 79), and so does fairy tale. Freud’s theories deal with the personal unconscious, with contents that have been repressed as unwanted, embarrassing and inappropriate. Jung expands this realm to contain “motifs that have never been experienced” (Jung JOM 79), and can, for a large part, never become fully conscious. The great stories passed on by humankind from generation to generation retell the fate of man as man, and these are the
issues Jung’s concept of archetypes and the Collective Unconscious touches on.

In his preface to Jung’s *Psyche and Symbol*, De Laszlo claims that Jung’s “dramatically intuitive approach […] sweeps across the neatly established and carefully guarded confines of many disciplines…” (xxiv), which parallels the fact that scholars from a variety of disciplines have tried to make sense of fairy tale, myth and similar text types from various angles. In some way, Jung even united in himself this variety of approaches; his thinking was heavily influenced by the concepts of gnosis, alchemy, the religions of India and philosophies of China, as well as by first-hand experiences made on journeys to “primitives” (Baumann 8).

Jung never claims that modern psychology, Freudian or Jungian, is the first to recognize the psychological nature of myth or fairy tale. On the contrary, he is eager to trace a “hoary tradition […] all the way back to the Stoics. […] For millennia, […] the subject matter of myth has been recognized by some to be inner rather than outer – or, more often, inner as well as outer” (JOM 213).

### 4.1 The Collective Unconscious

Two of the key concepts to Jungian thinking are the Collective Unconscious and archetypes. Jung was

impressed, as Freud was not, by the presence of transpersonal, universal forces in the depth of the psyche. It was mainly the striking similarities between the myths, symbols, and mythological figures of widely separated peoples and civilisations that forced Jung to postulate the existence of a collective unconscious. (Eliade Quest 22)

Jung differentiates the personal unconscious as introduced by Freud, which contains memories, wishes and feelings that have been repressed as unwanted, inappropriate or harmful, from the Collective Unconscious, “eine in jedermann vorhandene, allgemeine seelische Grundlage überpersönlicher Natur” (Jung in Kast DdS 116).
Jung found that many symbols, motifs and typical situations he came across in his clinical work as well as his research into mythology are not repressed material resurfacing through dream, psychosis, ritual and art, but that “in addition to these manifestations of the personal, Freudian unconscious, there exist ‘fantasies (including dreams) of an impersonal character, which cannot be reduced to experiences in the individual’s past, and thus cannot be explained as something individually acquired’” (Segal/Jung JOM 7).

“[J]ust as the individual is not merely a unique and separate being, but is also a social being, so the human psyche is not a self-contained and wholly individual phenomenon, but also a collective one” (Jung JOM 62). Just like every human is born with a highly differentiated individual brain, it is still a human brain, and therefore collective and universal as well. Jung reflects on how the medical psychology of Freud and Adler on the one hand emphasize the personal dimension of the psyche, but how these scholars have to, at the same time, base their theories in general biological conditions – Freud in sexuality and Adler in self-assertiveness. A certain instinctual and common layer to human’s psychological makeup is hence no unfamiliar concept (Jung AT&KU 57f).

The hypothesis of the collective unconscious is, therefore, no more daring than to assume there are instincts. One admits readily that human activity is influenced to a high degree by instincts. [The idea that] our imagination, perception, and thinking are likewise influenced by inborn and universally present formal elements [seems] just as much or just as little mysticism as the theory of instincts. [...] [T]he collective unconscious is neither a speculative nor a philosophical but an empirical matter. (Jung JOM 57)

For Jung, the existence of a Collective Unconscious is put “beyond any doubt” by numerous “individual instances showing the autochthonous revival of mythological motifs” (Jung JOM 57). “In fact, the whole of mythology could be taken as a sort of projection of the collective unconscious” (Jung JOM 79). The contents of the Collective Unconscious are, in summary, not individual memories, wishes and emotions, but “the great ‘primordial images’, as Jacob Burckhardt once aptly called them, the inherited possibilities of human imagination as it was from time immemorial” (Jung JOM 62) – the archetypes.
The following section will explain in more detail Jung’s concept of archetypes, their relation to instincts and symbol and feeling as well as Kantian thought.

4.2 Archetypes

Let me begin this section with a defence that Jung felt necessary to voice regarding his model of the archetypes:

[J]My concept of the “archetypes” has been frequently misunderstood as denoting inherited patterns of thought or as a kind of philosophical speculation. In reality they belong to the realm of the activities of the instincts and in that sense they represent inherited forms of psychic behaviour. (Jung P&S xvi)

Jung repeatedly emphasizes how observing, describing and classifying, i.e. a natural scientific approach, is the only meaningful way of dealing with complex material such as his. He had extensive opportunity during his work as a psychoanalyst to access such material in the form of dreams, fantasies, visions and delusional ideas, and could not help but notice regularities (Jung AT&KU 200).

The same regularities can be found in fairy tales and related literary genres: “When, for instance, one examines the world of fairytales, one can hardly avoid the impression that one is meeting certain figures again and again, albeit in altered guise” (Jung JOM 65). “Over the whole of this psychic realm there reign certain motifs, certain typical figures which we can follow far back into history, and even into prehistory, and which may therefore legitimately be described as ‘archetypes’” (Jung JOM 65).

Jung’s concept of the archetypes is a crucial as well as complex one, and the next subchapters aim at providing a fuller understanding of the concept, its origins and its means of expression.
4.2.1 Empirical basis - instincts

Contrary to what one may assume when first confronted with Jung’s ideas, namely that the constructs he created are very much based in theory or seem almost poetic, Jung insists that the concept of archetypes has arisen from a “purely phenomenological point of view” (Jung AT&KU 199; my translation).

The idea of basically unchanging core elements which are reassembled in various ways throughout the cultures of the world is not singular to Jung. The American mythologist Joseph Campbell, like many others (e.g. Bastian, see below), has formulated similar concepts as a result of his work in comparative religion and mythology. He equals them to “the elements of a kaleidoscope, only a few and always the same” even though “appearing everywhere in new combinations” (Campbell 3). What Campbell calls a “fund of mythological motifs” (4) is the same phenomenon called archetypes by Jung, the sum of which constitutes the Collective Unconscious.

At first, the idea that certain images are supposed to be part of our knowledge from birth seems hard to believe. In order to investigate the possibility, or rather the likelihood of innate structures in animals as well as humans, Campbell presents studies of animal behaviour concerned with instincts, i.e. inherited structures in the nervous system that allow animals to react to threats in their environment without having learned this specific reaction. (30)

This function of instincts is, of course, generally known; however, the specificity of these functions does induce curiosity and astonishment:

Chicks with their eggshells still adhering to their tails dart for cover when a hawk flies overhead, but not when the bird is a gull or duck, heron or pigeon. Furthermore, if the wooden model of a hawk is drawn over their coop on a wire, they react as though it were alive – unless it be drawn backward, when there is no response. (Campbell 31)

This is, I dare say, an astonishing example of an extremely precise image triggering “an immediate, unplanned, unlearned, and even unintended system of appropriate action” (Campbell 31).
Campbell observes that all animals are endowed with certain innate modes of behaviour and perception that they do not need to acquire but which are, so to speak, hardwired into their very being; he argues, therefore, that it should be “asked whether man, like those other members of the [animal] kingdom, does not possess any innate tendencies to respond, in strictly patterned racial ways, to certain signals flashed by its environment and its own kind” (6).

Jung of course fully agrees with this view: „Wir müssen heutzutage von der Hypothese ausgehen, daß der Mensch […], wie jedes Tier, eine präformierte, artgemäße Psyche besitzt, welche überdies […] noch deutliche Züge familiärer Vorbedingungen aufweist“ (Jung AT&KU 94).

An argument that is often presented against man’s being determined by instincts that were necessary and helpful thousands of years ago is that we have not needed them in ages; but Campbell imagines, not unconvincingly, that “even if all the hawks in the world were to vanish, their image would still sleep in the soul of the chick – never to be roused, however, unless by some accident of art” (31). And why shouldn’t it remain in the bird’s ‘blueprint’? What would trigger a deletion of something so crucial, so vital to self-preservation, even if it were slumbering unused for generations? As Jung puts it: „The archetypes are by no means useless archaic survivals or relics. They are living entities, which cause the praeformation of numinous ideas or dominant representations“ (P&S xvi).

4.2.2 Precursory theories

Campbell not only turns to Jung’s concept of archetypes in order to link the well-established notion of biological instincts to the less established one of psychological archetypes, but also refers back to earlier theories. Adolf Bastian, a well travelled nineteenth-century polymath, coined the expression “elementary idea” (Elementargedanke) to describe the ever same, reoccurring motifs among peoples all over the world, contrasting them to the “ethnic idea” (Völckergedanke), which is what he called the changing local manifestation of
elementary ideas in various compositions (Campbell 32). Like Jung some decades later, Bastian claims that the elementary idea never shows in a pure form, “but rather, like the image of man himself, they are to be known only by way of the rich variety of their extremely interesting, frequently startling, yet always finally recognizable inflections in the panorama of human life” (Campbell 32).

“The elementary idea (Elementargedanke) is never itself directly figured in mythology, but always rendered by way of local ethnic ideas or forms (Völkergedanke), and these […] are locally conditioned” (Campbell 130). “We may therefore think of any myth or rite […] as a clue to what may be permanent or universal in human nature (in which case our emphasis will be psychological, or perhaps even metaphysical)” (Campbell 461).

Venturing further into the field of metaphysics, even parallels to Platonic thought force themselves on the keen observer: „Archetypus' ist nun nichts anderes als ein schon in der Antike vokommender Ausdruck, welcher mit 'Idee' im Platonischen Sinne synonym ist“, says Jung (AT&KU 91), continuing however that he is not a philosopher but an empirical thinker.

4.2.3 Archetypes as a priori
We have heard that Jung deducted his theory of archetypes from phenomenological, empirical observation. However, archetypes are not to be confused with their manifestations, with the images and symbols through which they can be experienced. They themselves “exist” in a sphere different from experience, prior to it – they are a priori to our way of perceiving and thinking. Jung muses about the irony in Kant’s work when it comes to metaphysics and categories:

Bezeichnenderweise ist es gerade Kants Kategorienlehre, welche einerseits jeden Versuch einer Metaphysik im alten Sinne im Keime erstickt, andererseits aber eine Wiedergeburt Platonischen Geistes vorbereitet: wenn es schon keine über menschliches Vermögen hinauskletternde Metaphysik geben kann, so gibt es auch keine Empirie, die nicht schon
All empirical data, all the external “reality” still has to be perceived and processed by a thinker, and this thinker in turn has certain filters and settings according to which information can be adapted. Kant has famously argued that two such basic categories are time and space, since even if we know nothing about a phenomenon, we know that we, as humans, will experience it as something in time and/or space, making these categories part of our setup rather than characteristics of the perceived phenomenon.

Jung now takes this idea of preexisting structures that form our perception of the world and applies it to the stunning amount of similar data, similar pictures that he encountered in his research, reasoning that the similarity of visible outcomes is generated by the pre-formation through archetypes:

Ich begegne immer wieder dem Missverständnis, daß die Archetypen inhaltlich bestimmt, das heißt eine Art unbewusster 'Vorstellungen' seien. [...] Die Archetypen sind nicht inhaltlich, sondern bloß formal bestimmt. [...] Der Archetypus ist ein an sich leeres, formales Element, das nichts anderes ist als eine „facultas praeformandi”, eine a priori gegebene Möglichkeit der Vorstellungsform. (Jung AT&TU 95)

Not the concrete image is the archetype, but that which made it into its distinctive form. Joseph Campbell expresses a similar thought about mythology, in a more poetic way:

Gerhart Hauptmann has somewhere said that poetry is the art of causing the Word to resound behind words (Dichten heisst, hinter Worten das Urwort erklingen lassen). In the same sense, mythology is a rendition of forms through which the formless Form of forms can be known. An inferior object is presented as the representation, or habitation, of a superior. (Campbell 55)

One interesting question in the context of archetypal forming is whether it “happens” during the process of perception or the process of production. The answer to that must of course be: both. On the one hand, archetypes can be seen as filters through which we experience situations, objects, people – the
outer world. They determine what gets in, how much of it, and in which form. At the other end of the spectrum we find artistic production:

Da alles Psychische präformiert ist, so sind es auch dessen einzelne Funktionen [...]. Dazu gehört vor allem die schöpferische Phantasie. In den Produkten der Phantasie werden die ‚Urbilder’ sichtbar, und hier findet der Begriff des Archetypus seine spezifische Anwendung. (Jung AT&KU 94)

Creative fantasy is, as part of the human mind’s and psyche’s setup, itself guided by the form-giving nature of the archetype, which puts its seal on all of human’s products. Jung summarizes that there is an a priori to all human activity, namely the “unconscious individual structure of the psyche” (AT&KU 93), which is not a tabula rasa but a “complicated and individually determined precondition” (AT&KU 93).

It is due to this common pre-formation that researchers from various fields, be it religion, be it mythology, literature, sociology or anthropology, find so many similarities among humanity’s artistic products. Jung’s research can be seen as “der Nachweis, daß die Archetypen keineswegs bloß durch Tradition, durch die Sprache und durch die Migration sich allgemein verbreiten, sondern jederzeit und überall spontan wiederentstehen können” (Jung AT&KU 95). This aspect is particularly interesting when we think back to discussions about how fairy tales may have spread, starting out either as local legends or national myths that were „broken down“ at some point. In Jung’s view, there is no need to account for the spread of typical motifs, characters and plots, because the archetypal forms they are based on are part of the a priori psychological setup of humans everywhere in the world.

4.2.4 Archetype and symbol

As we have heard in the previous section,

[A]rchetypes are not determined as regards their content, but only as regards their form. [...] [This] might perhaps be compared to the axial system of a crystal, which, as it were, performs the crystalline structure in the mother liquid, although it has no material existence of its own. (Segal JOM 40)
The actual form in which archetypes present themselves to us is in symbols: “Symbols are the means by which archetypes, themselves unconscious, communicate to consciousness” (Segal JOM 40). Archetypes themselves, however, are not symbols: “The archetype does not symbolize something else in turn but is itself the symbolized” (Segal JOM 16). Segal uses the example of Odysseus to illustrate this point; Odysseus is a manifest symbol, an invented character. What he symbolizes is heroism, which “is not itself invented. […] For Jung, heroism, like divinity, constitutes so superhuman a status that humans could not consciously have invented the idea.” (Segal JOM 16) Heroism, or “the hero”, is the symbolized archetype behind the symbol Odysseus. This differentiation follows Kantian thoughts on the un/knowable:

Jung continually invokes Immanuel Kant to differentiate what we can know from what we cannot. Kant’s distinction between the unknowable, noumenal reality and the knowable, phenomenal one becomes for Jung not only the distinction between metaphysics and psychology but also the distinction within psychology between the unconscious and consciousness. It becomes as well the distinction between archetypes and symbols. (Segal JOM 11)

Symbols can, as was discussed earlier, be interpreted in a multitude of ways. Nonetheless, archetypes are so much richer in meaning that even a symbol can only present parts of it: “[T]he finiteness of any symbol, however rich, restricts the number of aspects of an archetype it can convey. For example, Homer’s Helen can convey only the erotic and seductive aspects of the Anima archetype; the Virgin Mary, only the motherly” (Jung JOM 42). Therefore, “[e]ach archetype requires an infinite number of symbols – as many symbols as there are dimensions of the archetype” (Jung JOM 40).

In this differentiation we also find a reason for cultural differences in the representation of archetypes; the archetypes are the same to humanity everywhere and “are transmitted by heredity”; symbols, on the other hand, are transmitted “by acculturation. Archetypes are the same universally; symbols vary from culture to culture” (Jung JOM 40f). Jung illustrates this point with the archetype of the saviour, different aspects of which are manifested through the
symbol of Buddha as well as that of Jesus. “Which symbol is employed by the archetype depends on which aspects of the archetype the subject, whether individual or group, needs to cultivate” (Jung JOM 41). Buddha, hence, covers one (or several) aspect(s) of the saviour archetype – but, as a symbol with restricted meaning, never all aspects. Jesus refers back to the same archetype, but covers different (and again, a restricted number of) aspects of it. “Symbols are the only medium for conveying archetypes, but they are an imperfect medium. Nothing can bridge the divide” (Segal JOM 11).

One must also be aware, as Jung stresses, of the difference between symbol and sign:

Jung vigorously distinguishes symbols from mere “signs” or “allegories” – terms he uses interchangeably. A sign or allegory has only a single meaning. A symbol has multiple meanings. [...] The meaning of a sign or allegory is conscious. The deepest meaning of a symbol is unconscious. [...] A sign or allegory conveys fully the signified or allegorized, [...] a symbol conveys only a portion of what it symbolizes, so that to know the meaning of a symbol is to gain only a glimpse at the symbolized. (Segal JOM 42)

Even though symbols can never fully relate an archetype, they are necessary for the archetype to take on some perceivable form. They are the means through which conscious encounter and assimilation become possible (see Jacobi 77). Fairy tales, like other fantastic fiction, offer ample opportunity to get in touch with these entities.

4.2.5 More than cognition

Von Franz, a modern Jung scholar, adds to the concept of archetypes that they are not only thoughts and ideas, i.e. restricted to our thinking, but also, and maybe even more so, “eine elementare Emotion und sogar ein elementarer Handlungsimpuls” (PM 14). Archetypes then are nothing one can simply think about, consider cognitively: “[darum] genügt es nicht, um diese Begriffe zu wissen und sie nachzudenken [...]. Archetypen sind Erlebniskomplexe“ (Jung AT&KU 39). They are to be experienced with every faculty available to the human as a whole. Also, they are not only impressions and perceptions, but
strong motivational forces inducing (often irrational and incomprehensible, unconsciously motivated) action in people. Thought, for von Franz, does not nearly cover the full impact archetypes have on the human mind, body and soul.

Jung himself makes a similar observation when he says that “one can perceive the specific energy of the archetypes when one experiences the peculiar feeling of numinosity that accompanies them” (Jung JOM 94). It may seem strange to make a scientific definition dependent on affects; however, one must not forget that when it comes to the inner workings of the psyche, even the most rational, empirical psychological schools need to rely on descriptions of feelings. The “feeling” or impression of numinosity is hence an important indicator that archetypal material is involved.

Verena Kast, another Jung scholar, also calls to attention this unique effect archetypal images have on us:

\[\text{[A]rchetypische Konstellationen faszinieren in der Regel. Im Zusammenhang mit der großen Emotion, die von archetypischen Konstellationen ausgelöst und an das Bewusstsein herangetragen wird, spricht Jung von }\text{ ‘Numinosität’. Es sind Bilder, die ergreifen, die packen, die auch zwingend sind [...]}, \text{die den Eindruck von Bedeutsamkeit vermitteln, [...] begleitet von intensiven Phantasien, Visionen, Ideen. (Kast DdS 118)}\]

All of these aspects taken together account for the impression of depth of meaning and the great emotional impact one experiences when faced with texts from mythology, religion, and also, importantly, the fantastic realm – be it classic fairy tales or modern fantasy fiction.

### 4.3 The Shadow

The Shadow, or one instance of it, is usually the first archetype encountered in the process of individuation (see below) as depicted by the hero’s journey. Jung describes the Shadow as “alles, was das Subjekt nicht anerkennt und was sich ihm doch immer wieder – direkt oder indirekt – aufdrängt, also zum Beispiel minderwertige Charakterzüge und sonstige unvereinbare Tendenzen” (Jung AT&KU 302). The Shadow is everything that we do not want to be or do not
want to see as existing in ourselves, which is instead projected onto somebody else.

In reality, every person is a mix of “good” and “bad” qualities, nice and not so nice sides of oneself – of one self. In order to augment one’s self-value and protect a (perhaps particularly vulnerable) ego, we try to keep up an image of ourselves that is exclusively positive – leaving the negative traits to be assigned to our surroundings. This is also what happens to characters in fairy tales: „[Der] Held kann in eine Gestalt und einen Schatten aufgespaltet sein, wenn das Bewusstsein den sich nähernden Inhalt nur so akzeptieren kann“ (von Franz PM 106). The approaching content may be a personification of (the hero’s own) aggression, fear or objectionable desire; some distance has to be put between the hero, with whom we identify, and the negative qualities that are still to be integrated.

This mechanism, called “splitting”, is originally applied by very young children:

Das Aufsplittern einer Persönlichkeit in zwei, damit das gute Bild unangetastet bleibt, findet sich keineswegs nur im Märchen; viele Kinder ergreifen diese Möglichkeit, um eine Beziehung zu bewältigen, mit der sie nicht fertig werden und die sie nicht verstehen. Alle Widersprüche lösen sich plötzlich auf. (Bettelheim 67)

Ambivalence is something hard to endure, especially for small children, whose very life depends on the existence and availability of an “all-good” mother. To acknowledge that this omnipotent caretaker also has malignant sides would be too much of a threat for the dependent, so infants split up the positive and negative aspects and assign them to two different people. The same process or mechanism is at work in fairy tales: “Gestalten im Märchen sind nicht ambivalent […] [E]ine Person ist entweder gut oder böse, aber nichts dazwischen” (Bettelheim 14).

Hence also the omnipresence of dead (i.e. “absent”) mothers and evil step-mothers in fairy tales. These step-mothers are everything a mother must not, but sometimes may well be; they are the collective Shadow of the mother
A crucial developmental task for every child is to overcome the strict (mental) separation of positive and negative characteristics and to integrate contradictory aspects (good-bad, male-female…) into a healthy whole. This is also what Jung defines as the goal of individuation, the first step of which is said encounter with the Shadow: „Die dialektische Auseinandersetzung im Prozess der psychischen Behandlung [or the hero’s journey] führt konsequenterweise zur Konfrontation des Patienten mit seinem Schatten, jener dunklen Hälfte der Seele, deren man sich je und je durch Projektion entledigt hat“ (Jung 34). The task at hand is re-internalizing the projected qualities in order to become “more”; more fully oneself, one self with all its contradictory aspects.

In fact, the characteristics represented by the Shadow are not in actuality all-negative. Aggression, for example, can be a healthy and necessary impulse for self-defense. It is fear of impulses yet unknown or urges too strong that make the Shadow a necessary stage in the (re-)internalization of the respective qualities. The Shadow also has „einen positiven Wert [als] treibende Kraft im Unbewussten, die nur insofern übel ist, als ihre Funktion nicht verstanden wird, und die, sobald der Held […] gewinnt, ausgelöscht wird. Es ist ein typischer Ausgang, daß der dunkle Schatten, sobald der Held den Sieg davon trägt, seine Macht verliert“ (von Franz PM 117). The Shadow only exists as a threatening outer entity as long as it has not been faced; once the qualities it represents have been recognized as existing in one’s own inside, the terrifying outer representation loses its power over the hero.

Recognizing one’s Shadow is a valuable accomplishment in an individual’s psychological development; not only is the self-image more complete, but one can also see other people more clearly (von Franz SndS 18): “[I]n die Tiefen des eigenen Bösen hinabzusteigen” is what enables you to instinctively recognize the equivalent qualities in others (von Franz SndS 18). Better knowledge of yourself, therefore, also means better knowledge of the other.
4.4 Anima and Animus

Jung’s work on the Collective Unconscious and the archetypes is a life’s work. He expanded his ideas over decades, influenced by a variety of sources from his practice as psychiatrist to comparative studies of religion and mythology to his own dreams. It is therefore no surprise that some of his concepts have undergone changes throughout the years; different aspects are brought to the foreground depending on his current focus of work.

The Anima is a good example for this changing focus, understanding and definition. Jung used the concept of the Anima in two rather different ways; on the one hand, and put most simply, as the counter-sexual part of man; on the other hand and especially in his earlier writings, he understood Anima as a much more potent and basic principle, equating it with the soul, the breath of life itself:

Anima’ heißt doch Seele und bezeichnet etwas sehr Wunderbares und Unsterbliches. [...] Beim Primitiven ist sie magischer Lebenshauch (daher „anima‘) oder Flamme. [...] Die Anima ist keine dogmatische Seele, keine anima rationalis, welche ein philosophischer Begriff ist, sondern ein natürlicher Archetypus, der in befriedigender Weise alle Aussagen des Unbewussten [...] subsumiert. [...] Man kann sie nicht machen, sondern sie ist immer das Apriori von Stimmungen, Reaktionen, Impulsen und was es sonst noch an psychischen Spontaneitäten gibt. [...] Mit dem Archetypus der Anima betreten wir das Reich der Götter, [a]lles was die Anima berührt, wird numinos, das heißt unbedingt, gefährlich, tabuirt, magisch. (Jung AT&KU 35ff)

In his later work, Jung lessens the Anima’s importance by stating that it is

doch nur ein Archetypus unter vielen [...]. Das zeigt sich schon in der Tatsache ihrer Weiblichkeit. Das was nicht Ich, nämlich männlich, ist, ist höchst wahrscheinlich weiblich, und weil das Nicht-Ich als dem Ich nicht zugehörig und darum als außerhalb empfunden wird, so ist das Animabild in der Regel auf Frauen projiziert. (Jung AT&KU 37)

One cannot help but critically notice how Jung equates „I“ with “male”, which points at the origins and development of his Anima concept. Of course he,
being a man, first encountered the Anima/Animus-dialectic one-sided and, if we remember the first description of the Anima, rather overwhelming in its numinosity. He speaks of Anima as an all-compassing numinous force that man – male man – encounters and has to conquer: „Denn die Beziehung zur Anima ist wiederum eine Mutprobe und ein Feuerordal für die geistigen und moralischen Kräfte des Mannes“ (Jung AT&KU 38f). Later, though, when the Anima has found a counterpart in the Animus, it is reduced to the “female” aspects in man’s psyche, as is the Animus for “male” aspects in woman’s.

It is important to note here that “male” and “female” are to be read and understood as principal forces in nature, like Yin and Yang. Fe/male does not, in this context, refer (exclusively) to a human’s physical setup. The Anima/Animus concept is a non-physical principle, not bound to bodies, which is already implied in the fact that no single individual is exclusively the one or the other: “Jedem Geschlecht wohnt das Gegengeschlecht bis zu einem gewissen Betrage inne“ (Jung AT&KU 37).

Baumann defines Anima and Animus as “counter-sexual images, the function of which Jung sees in compensation and approximation to a greater wholeness” (10). Note that he speaks of counter-sexual images; the bodies, embodiments of male/female characteristics are used for illustration, they have symbolic meaning and must not, as Jung repeatedly observes, be taken at face value.

The issues of compensation and approximation are already addressed in the encounter with the Shadow but become even clearer, especially in their solution, in the Anima/Animus complex:

Die durch den Schatten hervorgerufene Gegensatzproblematik [führt] schließlich im Verlaufe des Werkes zur Vereinigung der Gegensätze in der archetypischen Form des Hierosgamos, nämlich der ’chymischen Hochzeit‘. In dieser werden die supremen Gegensätze in der Gestalt des Männlichen und des Weiblichen (wie im chinesischen Yang und Yin) zu einer Einheit verschmolzen, welche keine Gegensätze mehr enthält und damit inkorruptibel ist. (Jung TdI 42)
Viewed in this light, the classic happy ending of fairy tales – the marriage – of course has its meaning on a level very different from that of other narrations focusing on male-female relationships. Prince and princess are, on a subject-level interpretation, representations of the complementing opposites of male and female tendencies within one individual, the less prominent of which has to be integrated and balance out the dominant one in the process of individuation. As Wendy Doninger summarizes, the individual

must merge with the submerged side of the personality (the other sex) in order to become psychologically whole. [...] To realize one’s full maturity, to become fully ‘integrated’ [requires] a removal of the psychological trappings of any particular sex, a realization of one’s wholeness. This is not unlike the process of mystical realization of nonduality described in many religions. (292f)

Doninger contrasts this view of (psychological) androgyny within one individual, which she herself categorizes as Jungian, with two other concepts. One is the classic idea of the split androgyn e, a being that originally encompasses both sexes and was split into halves “as a punishment for mortals who challenge the gods” (Doninger 295); this is of course Plato’s legendary “round man”.

Jean Piaget, the famous developmental psychologist, insisted that this differentiation – the split between subject and object, the differentiation between me and you – is a necessary step in cognitive development, out of the ouroboric state of non-differentiation. “One must learn to be one thing or another, to fish or cut bait sexually” (cited in Doninger 292). In this conception, the wish to reunite is a desperate, hopeless one and the return to an undifferentiated state, the “return to the womb, is a wish for death, for Thanatos” (Doninger 294). This Freudian approach “views the androgyne as something that must be split in order for life to proceed” (Doninger 333).

The third concept of overcoming the male/female opposition is called, by Doninger, “Two-in-One”. Androgyny is established through the union of “man and woman who join in perfect love [...]”. This is the romantic ideal of complete merging [and] certainly the most widespread of androgynous concepts”
(Doninger 293). She calls this the "hierogamy, or sacred marriage, [which] is represented by the androgynous image of the god and the goddess […]...; it is the merging of complementary opposites – the coniunctio oppositorum" (296).

Now, there seems to be some confusion: On the one hand, Doninger correctly categorizes Jung’s approach as one aiming for psychological wholeness within one individual; yet on the other hand, she uses the hierogamy and coniunctio oppositorum, two concepts frequently employed by Jung in the context of overcoming the divide between male and female, to describe a third, a different approach.

I think the confusion here can be traced back to the differentiation between object- and subject-level interpretations, between stories as they present themselves and their actual interpretation or meaning. The marriage of the god and the goddess, the prince and the princess – the approach named “Two-in-One” by Doninger – is often referred to by Jung, but it is in itself only a (literary, ritualistic etc.) representation of what he actually sees at work within the human psyche. The sacred marriage between fictional characters, for example in a fairy tale, is the manifest image presented to us – the actual “Jungian” process, however, happens within the psyche. It is itself invisible and not immediately relatable – which is the very reason for symbolic representation in the first place.

Doninger has therefore correctly differentiated between the “authentically Jungian”, intrapsychic approach on the one hand, and readings of the representations given on the surface level on the other hand. The “Two-in-One” approach would equal an object-level interpretation, where each character is indeed taken as an individual interacting with other individuals. This view is employed, for example, in feminist criticism, where the prince and princess are interpreted as man and woman, and the story line as representation of their actual interpersonal relationship.

In contrast to the approach termed “Freudian” by Doninger, where the longing for androgyny, a return to the undifferentiated state, is viewed as regressive and
even destructive, in the Jungian understanding “the desire to merge back into chaos is the goal of human existence, the supreme integration toward which one strives” (294). Doninger parallels the mystic’s wish to transcend all dualities “to the Jungian integration of the individual, for it celebrates the merging of two apparently separate entities” (294).

Apparently separate entities and opposites are central to all of Jung’s theorizing. Most of his core concepts are provided in pairings: ego/self, introversion/extraversion, individual/collective, conscious/unconscious, Anima/Animus etc. (Hillman 73).

The ego-defense mechanism of splitting, mentioned before in the context of the Shadow, is also called “Entweder/Oder-Denken” in German – either/or thinking. It is exactly the kind of thinking that has to be overcome, according to developmental psychology, by the young child, as well as – according to Jung – more profoundly by the adult later on: „Ohne das Erlebnis der Gegensätzlichkeit gibt es keine Erfahrung der Ganzheit […]. Obwohl die Einsicht in die Gegensätzlichkeit eigentlich unerläßlich ist, so kann sie doch praktisch nur von wenigen ertragen werden” (Jung TdI 25f). In Jung’s perception, hence, to truly overcome the thinking in polarities and dichotomies is an almost Herculean task.

4.5 Self and Ego

According to Eliade, for Jung “the most important archetype is that of the Self, i.e., the wholeness of man. He believed that in every civilization man is working – through what Jung called the process of individuation – toward the realization of the Self” (Eliade Quest 22). It is the most central and hardest to approach
archetype; Shadow and Animus/Anima have to have been confronted and integrated, especially since the latter is seen as a mediator to the Self (Baumann 10).

Jung differentiates between Self and Ego, the latter being the conscious part of the all-encompassing Self:

Ich bezeichne die ‚übergeordnete Persönlichkeit‘ gewöhnlich als ‚Selbst‘, womit ich eine scharfe Trennung mache zwischen dem Ich, das bekanntlich nur so weit wie das Bewusstsein reicht, und dem Ganzen der Persönlichkeit, in welches neben dem bewussten Anteil auch der unbewusste einbezogen ist. Das Ich steht also dem ‚Selbst‘ wie ein Teil dem Ganzen gegenüber. Insofern ist das Selbst übergeordnet. (Jung AT&KU 204)

The Ego is like the visible tip of the iceberg, the Self the complete formation. Unlike the Shadow, Anima or Animus, the representation of which we can detect in the course of a fairy tale, the Self is not easily discerned in a concrete character because of its scope and indefiniteness:

Es ist überhaupt undenkbar, daß es irgendeine bestimmte Figur geben könnte, welche archetypische Unbestimmtheit ausdrückte. Ich habe mich infolgedessen veranlasst gesehen, dem entsprechenden Archetypus den psychologischen Namen Selbst zu geben, welcher Begriff einerseits bestimmt genug ist, um einen Inbegriff menschlicher Ganzheit zu vermitteln, andererseits unbestimmt genug, um die Unbeschreiblichkeit und Unbestimmbarkeit der Ganzheit auszudrücken. (Jung TdI 23)

The Self is, if at all, more likely to be symbolised as an object, for example a (golden) ball, or a geometric form such as a circle, a star or a diamond (von Franz SndS 9).

Von Franz sees the Self as so central that she even claims all fairy tales, in the end, try to reveal this very archetype – „[die] psychische Gesamtheit“ (PM 12). It is due to the Self’s extreme scope and multitude of facets that relating its nature requires innumerable narrations. Also, since the Self is explored to a greater and greater extent throughout the process of individuation, different phases are
undergone – like the encounter with the Shadow, integration of Anima/Animus – which can be depicted separately, or with different foci, by diverse stories.

Von Franz highlights one type of tales in this context, though: “Es gibt einen Typus von Märchen, der sich speziell auf die Problematic der Begegnung mit dem Selbst konzentriert. Das sind die Märchen, die um das Thema der schwer erreichbaren Kostbarkeit kreisen“ (von Franz PM 191). She even called the book she dedicated to these tales „Search for the Self“; narrations about the quest for the Holy Grail or similar objects certainly qualify for this type of story. Nonetheless, in the end all fairy tales refer back, in some way, to the Self and its exploration (von Franz PM 12).

**4.6 Individuation**

There are several definitions of what individuation means, by Jung himself as well as by followers and critics. The aspect of individuation most relevant to our understanding of fairy tales deals with the relationship between the developing conscious Ego and the pre-existing unconscious Self. Jung sees individuation as

Integration des Unbewussten ins Bewusstsein. Es handelt sich um einen synthetischen Vorgang, den ich als ‘Individuationsprozess’ bezeichnet habe. Dieser Prozess entspricht eigentlich dem natürlichen Ablauf eines Lebens, in welchem das Individuum zu dem wird, was es immer schon war. (Jung AT&KU 49)

In the course of individuation, the Ego, which can be seen as focussed consciousness, explores the greater and complete entity of the unconscious Self. Stages on this exploration are the encounter with the – originally unconscious – Shadow and Anima/Animus, as well as numerous other relevant archetypes, and their successful integration. Individuation is the „search for wholeness, for an integration of the personality“ (de Laszlo in Jung P&S xxvii).

Baumann summarizes this process of individuation as

ein psychischer Integrations- und Wachstumsprozess. In seinem Ablauf erkennt („assimiliert“) das Ich-Bewusstsein bestimmte archetypische
Vorstellungen und Erlebniskomplexe, die zunächst entweder im Unbewussten ruhen oder in die Außenwelt projiziert sind, als Anteile der eigenen Psyche. Damit realisiert das Ich-Bewusstsein einen höheren Grad an innerer Ganzheit. (8)

Note that the entity that is “growing” or becoming more whole is ego-consciousness; the Self is always whole from the beginning, but it is for the most part unconscious, hence unknown to the Ego. As ego-consciousness becomes more familiar with the Self, a human being becomes more familiar with him- or herself, becomes, as quoted above, who they have been all along – the famous *gnothi seauton*, or Nietzsche’s/Pindar’s “werde, der du bist”.

This process of individuation, the encounter with various unconscious aspects and their assimilation or integration, is illustrated by the hero’s quest: „Der Initiationsweg des Schamanen, die Queste des Helden und der innere Weg der Mystiker beschreiben das, was unter Individuation gemeint ist“ (von Franz SndS 9; italics added). Although Jung concerns himself with all kinds of myth, the hero myth is most relevant as regards individuation; “the myth of the hero symbolizes at once an archetype and, even more, the psychological life cycle […], the emergence and development of the ego and of ego consciousness” (Jung JOM 145).

Von Franz emphasizes that the individuation process is always of einzigartige[r] Gestalt, ist ein einzigartiges Ereignis in einem einzigartigen Menschen. Trotzdem gibt es darin typische, wiederkehrende Züge, die in jedem Individuationsprozess ähnlich sind. Unter diesem Gesichtspunkt kann man sagen, daß Märchen typische Phasen in diesem Prozess spiegeln. (von Franz SndS, 184f)

This view can be nicely connected to concepts such as Joseph Campbell’s Quest of the Hero, which also symbolizes an individual’s journey on the search for self-actualization; in the end, the quest is always (also) a quest for the Self.
Part B – The Last Unicorn

1 Introduction

In this part, I want to illustrate the points made in the theoretical first part using Peter S. Beagle’s work *The Last Unicorn*. The tale was originally published as a novel, but it was also made into an animated movie; this is the form in which the story gained its great popularity with the audience.

Comparing book and movie, one will find that the movie version is more straight-forward; it has been cleared of a number of detours and dead ends that to some extent taint the original book version, which is overloaded by additional side plots that do not further the main story. Since Beagle himself authored the film version, it can be argued to still be the same piece of work by the same writer, only with more focus on the truly crucial aspects of the tale, and I will therefore allow myself to rest my analysis on the plot as it is presented in the movie rather than the book.

As with every interpretation, or attempted interpretation, I will of course pick aspects that I want to consider while leaving many others that may seem equally important aside. This pragmatic necessity has been (painfully) recognized not only by me, but almost any author I considered during research, for example Bruno Bettelheim:

> Beim Schreiben dieses Buches erschien es vernünftig, die zentrale Bedeutung eines Märchens herauszustellen; dies hat jedoch den Nachteil, daß andere Aspekte [...] vernachlässigt werden. Dies war [eine] notwendige Eingrenzung. (19)

Again, what is central to a story (and what is not) is already an act of interpretation and elimination, but there seems no way around this dilemma apart from accepting it as an inherent fact of this kind of literary work.
Beagle’s *The Last Unicorn* is often named as an example of modern fantasy fiction, and as we have seen, boundaries are hard to define. Claiming the status of “fairy tale” for TLU may seem bold, given that it is not a folklore tale with age-old tradition and a long oral history; however, Jones himself is somewhat generous with which pieces of work can be counted as belonging to the fairy tale genre:

Another important form of the fairy tale is that produced by literary authors, such as Hans Christian Andersen, Washington Irving, John Ruskin, Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, and Carlo Collodi in the nineteenth century, and L. Frank Baum, Edith Nesbit, Howard Pyle, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, P.L. Travers, Mary Norton, E.B. White, T.H. White, Ursula K: Le Guin, J.R.R. Tolkien, Madeleine L’Engle, and Maurice Sendak in the twentieth, who have used the fairy tale model to create original stories that imitate the oral genre. (33)

Although obviously not a traditional fairy tale, TLU is in accordance with some of the major defining characteristics (see chapter 1.4), such as high level of abstraction, resolution of a problem with a quest, lack of an emotional inner world and (arguably) a happy ending. Its brevity (compared to Tolkien, for example), its small set of characters and single plot strand also add to the reasons why (modern) fairy tale may well be a very suitable label for TLU.

## 2 The story interpretation

Von Franz insists that interpretation is an art as well as a craft, and that there are, even though few, guiding rules on how to approach a text. The “exposition” names place and time; two elements which are, typically, underdetermined or not given at all in fairy tales. The story takes place “in der Raum- und Zeittlosigkeit – dem Nirgendwo des kollektiven Unbewussten” (von Franz PM 30), called „illud tempus“, time now and always, by Eliade. She then proceeds to examine the Where, Who and Why as well as the Dramatis Personae, a process which will be followed (as far as possible in this limited context) in the subsequent chapters.
A specific “tool” employed for the interpretation of fairy tales and similar texts is the so called amplification. Von Franz as well as Kast refer to this method as follows:

Um herauszufinden, was ein Symbol bedeutet, wenden wir die Methode der Amplifikation an: das heißt, wir versuchen, zu einem Märchenmotiv Parallelen beizubringen, dann auch zu sehen, wo immer in der Menschheitsgeschichte dieses Symbol schon eine Rolle gespielt hat – und in welchem Bedeutungszusammenhang es gestanden hat. Über diese Amplifikationen wird die allgemeinste Bedeutung eines Symbols evident. (Kast MuF 8)

“Amplifikation bedeutet Erweiterung durch das Sammeln einer Menge von Parallelen” (von Franz PM 32). The usual contexts of an investigated motif, and its function and meaning in different texts have to be found, compared, and investigated for their predominant interpretation(s) (von Franz PM 32). This is important in order to establish a baseline for the motif in question, to get an impression of the “usual” pattern it is part of and its function therein, knowledge which can then be used to better understand the narration. Von Franz stresses that digressions must not be ignored for the sake of clarity; apart from adulterating the materials, the digression itself may be a valuable clue to the interpretation (von Franz PM 33).

2.1 A white Unicorn…

Before starting with the story proper, let us take a short look at the symbolic meaning and associations connected with a white unicorn.

Unicorns are described in Becker’s Lexicon of symbols as fabulous creatures, often white; in the beginning, they were depicted rather like a goat, donkey or bull; this changed later on to the now popular likenings of a horse with one horn. This horn can of course give raise to phallic associations, but since it emerges from the forehead, the place of the spirit, it also stands for sublimation and virginity. In Christianity, the Unicorn is a symbol of strength and purity and it is said that it can only be captured by a pure virgin, to whom it flees when pursued. (Becker “Einhorn”)
Stumpfe interestingly refers to the bull when he remarks on the horselike form of the Unicorn: “Das Pferd ist schön in seiner dynamisch gespannten und gerafften Form, es ist wach, in hohem Grad sensibel [...] nicht nur die vegetative Lebenskraft schlechthin (wofür besser Stier und Kuh stehen), sondern eben gerade die dynamische Intelligenz der aktiven Überschau” (84f). This contrast of sensitivity and etherealness in the horse-like form versus sheer life force in the bull is one of the most prominent dichotomies throughout the story.

Beagle’s Unicorn is explicitly described to resemble a doe rather than a horse: “She did not look anything like a horned horse, as unicorns are often pictured, being smaller and cloven-hoofed, and possessing that oldest, wildest grace that horses have never had, that deer have only in a shy, thin imitation” (Beagle 1). This depiction once again highlights and reinforces the impression of purity, clarity, perfection and spirit that is also represented by her colour, white. (Becker “Weiß”) White is close to the absolute, it is the colour of angels and saints, as well as ghosts. It signals innocence and virginity, like the unicorn itself, and stands in basic contradiction to the colour of life, red. Often, red is the colour assigned to man, white to women. (Becker “Weiß”) Once again, the powerful, male, Red Bull stands in dire contrast to the innocent, female, white unicorn.

2.2 … living in the woods by herself

Drewermann stresses how the beginning of a fairy tale, its introduction, holds the key to understanding. “Die ersten Zeilen eines Märchens enthalten meist verdichtet die Themenüberschrift der Handlung; sie zeigen das Problem auf” (FH 23); „wie in einem Traum thematisieren die Märchen und Mythen in ihren Anfangsbildern den geistigen oder psychischen Konflikt, dessen Auflösung in den folgenden Bildern versucht wird“ (Drewermann FH 42).
Röhr agrees with Drewermann, claiming: “Wie bei jedem Märchen stehen bereits in den ersten Sätzen die entscheidenden Hinweise […] [D]iese wenigen Hinweise beschreiben die Lebensumstände, die für die gesamte Entschlüsselung des Märchens von Bedeutung sind (Röhr 22).

Verena Kast also emphasizes the importance of the beginning of a fairy tale: „Das Märchen handelt immer von etwas, das den Fortgang des Lebens bedroht – meistens dargestellt in der Ausgangssituation des Märchens -, und es zeigt, welcher Entwicklungsweg aus diesem Problem heraus- und in eine neue Lebenssituation hineinführt“ (Kast MuF 7).

In Campbell’s monomyth, the call to adventure happens because the hero's world is in some kind of danger (Quinn 6). What, now, is the danger, what is the problem to be solved by the Unicorn?

It takes the remarks of passing-by hunters to make the Unicorn aware of her state of existence, of the fact that she is basically on her own, without any other beings like herself. "Unicorns are long gone" (Beagle 3). “That can’t be, she thought. She had never minded being alone, never seeing another unicorn, because she had always known that there were others like her in the world, and a unicorn needs no more than that for company” (Beagle 6).

This isolation is very peculiar: On the one hand, she is the keeper of the forest, it is “her” forest and when she gets ready to leave, a few animals do gather to wish her farewell; however, she does not really seem to be part of any kind of community. The butterfly can speak; it is therefore not unreasonable to assume that some or all of the other animals could speak as well. However, there is no communication at all with the forest’s inhabitants. “They were the first words she had spoken, even to herself, in more than a hundred years” (Beagle 6).

The Unicorn is all alone and strangely detached. She is not indifferent to the wood and her duties to its dwellers (she promises to return as quickly as possible); still, there is no emotionality involved. What Bettelheim says about Sleeping Beauty may quite well also apply to the Unicorn in her initial state:
Wenn wir uns nicht ändern und weiterentwickeln wollen, könnten wir genauso gut in einem todesähnlichen Schlaf verharren. Während ihres Schlafes ist die Schönheit der Heldin frigide; sie ist in ihrem Narzissmus isoliert. Bei einer solchen ausschließlichen Beschäftigung mit sich selbst unter Ausschluss der übrigen Welt gibt es kein Leiden, aber man gewinnt damit auch keine Erkenntnis, und man lernt keine neuen Gefühle kennen. (Bettelheim 222)

Beauty, isolation, being withdrawn and engaged in narcissistic self-contemplation (unicorns live “where there is a pool clear enough for them to see themselves – for they are a little vain” (Beagle 2)) – these are all traces we can find in the Unicorn as well. Later in the story she comes to explain to Schmendrick that unicorns do sorrow, but do not regret, and that other strong emotions – also positive ones – are equally unknown to them. Hers is the beauty of lifeless detachment: the other animals “hunted and loved and had children and died, and as the unicorn did none of these things, she never grew tired of watching them” (Beagle 2).

The woods as an initial setting are of course full of symbolic meaning themselves: They are mysterious places, often considered holy and inhabited by spirits. They are a place of isolation and withdrawal for ascetics and eremites, stand for concentration and inwardness. In psychoanalysis, they often represent the unconscious or the female sphere. (Becker “Wald”) „Der Wald ist in den Träumen und Mythen ein Symbol des Unbewussten, Ursprünglichen, Dunklen, Weiblichen“ (Jung in Drewermann MoH 44). "Ein Wald ist ein Gebiet, in dem die Sichtweite begrenzt ist, wo man sich verirrt, wo wilde Tiere und unerwartete Gefahren vorhanden sein können, und daher ist er, wie das Meer, ein Symbol des Unbewussten“ (von Franz PM 119).

We find our heroine in a place of withdrawal and a state of isolation, with what seems little contact to the social world surrounding her. The danger, obstacle to development, or simply the problem in our story can be seen on three levels: Firstly, there is a threat to the “species”, to the kind of being she represents – the unicorn as such. Unicorns, so we hear, are about to get lost to the world, a
world that would then be impoverished, lack this magical creature. This is one aspect of the lack, the threat to the world on a grand scale, that has to be met.

Another problem, on a second level, is that now, all of a sudden, the Unicorn for the first time realizes that she is on her own, without any beings like herself. This fuels the wish for true companionship, a group, a family to belong to. For the Unicorn, it is hence also her social world that has long been missing vital aspects that now have to be found and restored. This is a smaller, but nonetheless important level on which the Unicorn’s world is insufficient, lacking and in danger of diminishing.

On a third level, finally, one could also argue that the other, missing unicorns are pieces of herself, or her Self, pieces that she has up to now done without but which are due to be developed - a realization that she could be “more”, that it is time to become more. This third reading is backed up particularly by the kind of herald figure that delivers the call to adventure, a butterfly (see next section). As von Franz tells us, solitude can also be seen as a precursor or prerequisite of psychological changes; she identifies “[das] Motiv der Einsamkeit […] als ein[en] Vorbote[n] für eine spezielle, individuelle Entwicklung der Persönlichkeit“ (PM 169).

2.3 ... one day meets a butterfly

Campbell, in his monomyth, describes three phases of the hero’s travel: Separation, Initiation and Return. The first and most distinctive stage of the separation phase is labelled “the call to adventure” (Quinn 6), wherein the hero is prompted to leave his usual surroundings and start on a journey.

As Quinn states clearly in his account of the monomythic model, it has never, not even by Campbell himself, been fully used to account for a complete narrative: “[N]owhere does Campbell apply his paradigm in full to any of the many heroes he cites as examples in support of his model” (2). Rather, he himself as well as scholars following his approach have “extract[ed] a portion of it to function as a context for interpretation” (2), an eclectic approach that will be
taken in this paper as well. Hence, not all phases will be relevant and discussed.

“Generally, the invitation to adventure is announced by a herald figure” (Quinn 6); this main herald in our story is certainly the butterfly, although one can also count the hunters as precursors; they are the first to stir up the Unicorn’s hitherto quiet mind and make her question her solitary existence.

“The herald present[s] the opportunity to act to the prospective hero”; this figure can be seen to represent the “repressed instincual fecundity within ourselves” (Quinn 7), i.e. existing inner potential that wants to be realized and lived. The herald can also represent "a facet of the hero’s psyche […] or the prefiguration of the ultimate goal” (Quinn 7). Especially the second aspect is interesting given that the herald is a butterfly; the ultimate goal, then, would be transformation. The core symbolism of the butterfly is of course that of metamorphosis, from caterpillar via catatonic cocoon to a colourful, sun-directed insect (Becker “Schmetterling”).

Wenn ein Tier mythologisch als wirkliches Tier erscheint [...] dann stellt es ein instinktives Muster, einen Impuls dar, wobei verschiedene Tiere verschiedenen Formen instinktiven Verhaltens entsprechen. (Von Franz SndS, 174)

The butterfly clearly represents the Unicorn’s inner, still unconscious impulse to change, to enter a new stage of existence. This notion (that it is time for change) is also hinted at in the description of her fur being “no longer the careless color of sea foam, but rather the color of snow falling on a moonlit night” (Beagle 1) – she is not completely “new” to this world any more, not a complete child, but has reached a certain age. The butterfly, in psychoanalysis, is a symbol for liberation and new beginning; also, its Greek name is psyche – it is the soul itself (Becker “Schmetterling”). The Unicorn’s quest, we see, will be about her soul and her advancing development, metamorphosis of some kind.
2.4 ... who tells the tale of a Red Bull

Made curious by the hunter's remarks about her being the last of her kind, the Unicorn asks the butterfly whether he has, on his extensive travels, seen others like her. After some gibberish, the butterfly relates to her the story of the Red Bull chasing “[her] people […] down all the roads long ago” (Beagle 15).

Similar to a white unicorn, a red bull is of course in itself a strong combination of symbols; the animal and the colour have to be considered, as well as the element fire, since the bull does not only have red, but fiery, burning skin.

The bull stands for force, strength, energy, the male fight and wilderness. The Egyptian god of fertility, Apis, was depicted as a bull, and similar imagery can be found in Minoan and Iranian culture. In psychoanalysis, the bull stands for the animalistic forces of sexuality (Becker “Stier”). The symbolism of the bull is clearly violent, strong, and full of (sexual) impulsiveness: The bull symbolizes “brutale Impulsivität, die durch Kraft agiert”; every animal, when amplified, represents a human characteristic or behaviour, but especially highlights the instinctive (von Franz SndS 174f).

The colour red reinforces this already strong image: Red is the colour of fire and blood; life, love, passion, fertility (Becker “Rot”). “Rot ist die Farbe, welche heftige Emotionen symbolisiert, ganz besonders solche sexueller Art” (Bettelheim 164). Bettelheim provides the example of Red Riding Hood, whose red hood symbolizes „knospend[e] Sexualität” (164) that was passed on to her from her grandmother (who represents the “Urmutter”) and which threatens the young girl by drawing the wolf’s attention towards her.

The third aspect to be considered, the fire, is in itself a very multifarious symbol. On the one hand, it is clearly a destructive force: Fire is „der große Zerstörer […]; immer wenn eine Emotion die eigene Selbstkontrolle überflutet, taucht das Motiv des destruktiven Feuers auf” (von Franz PM 97). On the other hand, it is also a catalyst of psychic energy and fosters change: “Ohne das Feuer der Emotion findet keine Entwicklung statt und kann kein höheres Bewusstsein erreicht werden […]. [Es] beschleunigt das Feuer, sogar wenn es eine destruktive Art von

Hillman also stresses the duality of fire’s nature: „Feuer ist ebenso verbrennende Gewalt, wie es Licht und Wärme und meditative Reflexion ist; es schützt, es beschleunigt das Leben, und es reinigt für den Tod“ (117).

According to Becker, fire is often holy, used for cleansing and renewing. A destructive power, but used for rebirth on a higher plane (like the phoenix from the ashes). It is often met in connection with red, blood, and the heart and it is the natural counterpoint to water (Becker “Feuer”).

In the teachings of temperaments, fire corresponds to the choleric. [...] Jung sometimes relates to the old differentiation between active-male – fire and wind – and passive-female – earth and water (Becker “Elemente”). Obviously, the white unicorn and the red bull have to be seen as a contrasting pair - “das Doppelgesicht der Menschenseele, untrennbar das sanfte besinnliche Schneeweisse und das aktive bewegliche Rosenrote” (Stumpfe 91).

The Red Bull can be seen as the central Shadow archetype the white Unicorn encounters; he is everything that she is not, or does not want to be, or that she is not as of yet. Her purity, fragility and lightness are so over-pronounced that somewhere in the story, projected onto a separate character, some kind of balancing characteristics have to be found if we approach the tale on a subject-level. As we know, the Shadow may seem like an evil, or in some way negative counterpart, but the real struggle is to overcome the imbalance and integrate opposites. Stumpfe, when he considers the colour pair of red and white, takes the knight Parzival as an example of tamed emotionality:

In der Meditation des roten flüssigen Lebensbluts und seiner Spannung zur kristallinen kühlen Weiße des aus dem Luftraum eindringenden Schnees überwand Parzival die Stufe des roten Ritters, überschaute die Triebhaftigkeit der leidenschaftlichen Aktion. [...] Am zweiten Festtag des Königs kam der Prinz in weißer Rüstung auf einem weißen Pferd: er hatte die Stufe der gemeisterten hellen Denk- und Erkenntniskraft erreicht“. (Stupfe 68)
Von Franz sheds yet another light on the complex interworking of instinct, impulse and the animalistic on the one hand and reason, tameness, softness on the other hand: „Im Unbewussten sind Geist und Instinkt keine Gegensätze. Im Gegenteil, neue geistige Keime manifestieren sich oft zuerst in einem Ansturm sexueller Libido oder Instinktimpulse und entwickeln erst später ihren anderen Aspekt“ (PM 167). The fire of passion, therefore, may be the necessary prerequisite for any development, the lighting spark.

Summarizing, it seems that with the (tale of the) Red Bull, the Unicorn encounters, or gets a preview of her encounter, with strong emotional forces of an ambivalent but potentially highly aggressive and destructive nature. The bull, the colour red and the fire all hint at the topics fertility/sexuality, blood and transformation. Remembering that she is “no longer the careless color of sea foam” (Beagle 1), but some more mature shade, an interpretation suggests itself that equals the “coming of the Red Bull” to coming puberty, maybe even, on a very physical level, menarche. This suggestion is well backed when we jump ahead in the story and think of her being physically turned into a young woman, suddenly finding herself in this new and unfamiliar body when meeting the Red Bull. The sexual urges, potential for passion and lust embodied by the bull are still perceived as solely aggressive and dangerous, something to be feared. Bull and Unicorn are as far apart as possible.

2.5 … The Unicorn departs…

The hero’s quest usually involves some kind of peregrination, extensive travel through unknown and wondrous land. The Unicorn has received a call to adventure by the herald figure, the butterfly. The next sub-phase is called “refusal of the call” (Quinn 6); if we assume that the hunter’s remark was already a first call, we can interpret her initial disbelief of his statement as an attempt to refuse the call that is only resolved when another herald provides a clearer, grimmer version of the unicorns’ disappearance.

The fact that the hero has to wander off into an unknown territory is by itself of great symbolic importance: „[Die Wanderschaft] vieler Helden beinhaltet einen
ausgesprochen symbolhaften Charakter; zum ersten initiiert sie […] das Geschehen, d.h. sie verleiht den Gestalten eine dynamische Komponente; die eher passiv anmutende Ausgangslage (z.B. „Es war einmal…“) wird dadurch in […] Aktivität übergeleitet“ (Spring 132).

The action progresses as the hero’s journey progresses; he is passing through various stages on his physical as well as moral/emotional way. There is much meaning already in the symbol of “way” or “path” itself: They represent the problems of searching, inner and outer travel. They are even a symbol for human life as such - man as wanderer (Becker „Weg“).

One typical time of upheaval and change that can likely be seen as the departure into a new world is puberty: „Aufbruchsphasen werden verstanden als Phasen, in denen neues Leben, neue Einsichten, neue Verhaltensmöglichkeiten dem Menschen erfahrbar werden, neue Perspektiven ihm aufgehen. […] Die Adoleszenz [ist] eine sehr typische Aufbruchsphase“ (Kast DdS 76f).

It is particularly interesting in our context to hear what Bettelheim says about the hero’s departure and travel to the “outside world“:

Nur wenn er in die Welt hinauszieht, kann sich der Märchenheld (das Kind) dort finden; und dabei findet er auch den anderen Menschen, mit dem er vergnügt bis an sein Ende leben kann, das heißt, ohne jemals wieder unter Trennungsangst zu leiden. (16)

The child, or the hero for them, goes on a quest to the outside world in order to find themselves – as well as „den anderen Menschen“, a counterpart, a vis-à-vis. We established in the beginning that the problem to be faced by the Unicorn is a threefold one – threat to unicorns as such, finding parts of herself that have not yet been discovered, and, emphasized here, finding “the others”, others like herself, contact to them.
2.6  … meets the evil witch

Mommy Fortuna is a classic evil witch – old, ugly and mean even to her own company, but at the same time possessing the power of witchcraft as well as certain knowledge relevant to the Unicorn.

The witch is a particularly fascinating archetypal figure from a cultural point of view. According to von Franz, she represents “die dunkle Seite der großen Erdgöttin” (SndS 38). The formerly wide-spread belief in a mother goddess with benign, but at the same time very dark and “devouring” aspects, has deceased in Western culture as a result of Christianisation. The earth goddess’ positive features have been preserved in the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God in Christian belief; the dark and destructive parts were abandoned, “ins Unbewusste abgeschoben” (von Franz SndS 38).

The mother goddess met an even worse fate in Protestantism, which does not worship a female (mother) figure at all. According to von Franz, this is one of the reasons why the witch figures so prominently in European fairy tales; nowhere else can the goddess show her dark face (SndS 39). Similar to the devil in relation to an all-good God father, the witch incorporates all the negative aspects of a formerly ambivalent but now cleansed and exclusively good entity. This dynamic has also been observed by Neumann, who writes: „Die Figur der Großen Mutter regrediert nun mythologisch zur Hexe, welche z.B. im Märchen die Tochter verzaubert und einkerkert“ (24).

The witch is called „Mommy“, mother, and indeed incarcerates the Unicorn. The witch is not only the dark residue of an ambivalent great goddess, but also an aspect of the mother archetype: „Wie jeder Archetypus, so hat auch derjenige der Mutter eine schier unabsehbare Menge von Aspekten. […] [Sie alle] können einen positiven, günstigen oder einen negativen, nefasten Sinn haben […], nefast die Hexe“ (Jung AT&KU 70).

At a closer look, there are indeed a few aspects in Mommy Fortuna’s behaviour and motivation that are somewhat motherly, albeit in a negative sense. She takes a certain pride in having trapped a real unicorn, in owning her and
showing her off to the audience. This pride is definitely reminiscent of the way in which some mothers show off their daughters as “exhibits” of their own abilities and achievements, of how they trap them in (golden) cages and hinder further development – which would finally lead their daughters away from them.

Mommy Fortuna is also a motherly figure in the sense that she is a woman, and, in some sense, older than the Unicorn. We know, of course, that the Unicorn is immortal and may well count more years; still, the witch has, in this comparison, to be viewed as her elder at least in terms of experience. We have already established that the Unicorn is only about to begin her journey, that she is in some way still young or immature, undeveloped, whereas the witch is far travelled and experienced; life and its woes have left marks on her face, her back is bent, her teeth are rotten.

Also, the witch possesses knowledge that the Unicorn is only about to gain – Mommy Fortuna knows about the Red Bull, about its keeper and the danger that the Unicorn is facing. In an almost intimate conversation, she lets her superior knowledge shine through together with the remark that the Unicorn should be glad since she is much safer in the witch’s cage than she would be on her way to the bull – another very suggestive passage easily associated with motherly warnings regarding the opposite sex.

In the character of Mommy Fortuna, the Unicorn hence encounters the witch and (some parts of) the mother, both of which are, in turn, aspects of the Anima:

Die Anima ist eine bipolare Figur [...] und kann daher bald positiv, bald negativ erscheinen; bald alt, bald jung; bald Mutter, bald Mädchen; bald gültige Fee, bald Hexe; bald Heilige, bald Hure. Neben dieser Ambivalenz hat die Anima ‚okkulte‘ Beziehungen zu ‚Geheimnissen‘, überhaupt zur Dunkelwelt [...] (Jung AT&KU, 216)

The fact that the Unicorn herself is female does not mean that within the story, the Anima, or several of her various forms, plays no role and only male figures are relevant for the Anima/Animus issue. The Anima may not be what a female protagonist is questing for or enchanted by, as are male protagonists in their
quest to free a damsel in distress, but it is still such a central archetypal figuration that a story without characters representing at least some of its forms is hardly thinkable.

Moreover, being female – as a fictional character or as a de facto woman – does not equal “being” or even only automatically “knowing” the Anima; females, fictional or real, also have to encounter and become acquainted with this numinous constellation of images, thoughts and feelings. This complex of ideas and associations may be related to their sex – but we should never forget that it still represents an abstract principle, an idea in the Platonic sense, not woman(hood) as actually embodied by living breathing women. The Anima and her numerous manifestations – witches, fairy godmothers, goddesses – are hence as fascinating, unfamiliar and numinous to female readers as they are to male ones, and encountering them in fairy tales or similar fantastic stories touches and moves them as much as any male reader.

Of course, Mommy Fortuna is also a Shadow character. Dark, old and ugly, she is a negative counter image to the bright, ageless and beautiful unicorn. We remember that the Shadow embodies everything that the heroine cannot or will not consciously accept as a part of herself; typical Shadow figures, the ones emblematic for a culture – like the witch – are likely to incorporate what is unwanted by the social norm: “Der Schatten des Helden ist […] derjenige Aspekt des Archetyps, der vom kollektiven Bewusstsein abgelehnt wurde” (von Franz PM 106).

Mommy Fortuna epitomizes unattractiveness, old age and death – concepts (or rather facts) certainly unwished for and rejected by our society. “In anderen Märchen repräsentiert die Hexe einfach die destruktive Seite des archetypischen weiblichen Prinzips, das Prinzip des Todes, der Krankheit, der Auflösung oder auch das Böse im Unbewussten” (von Franz SndS 39). Goddesses or Great Mothers have always been considered to give as well as take life; the second part of this natural circle, however, has become de-naturalized, marginalized and branded evil, belonging to the sphere of the witch.
2.7 ... *is turned into a woman*

A crucial point in the story is certainly when the Unicorn is turned into a young woman, which is not so much Schmendrick’s conscious doing but a process that overcomes him and the Unicorn respectively with all the force of magic – nature’s magic. “What words the magic spoke this second time, he never knew surely. They left him like eagles, and he let them go” (Beagle 142).

Note that this decisive change happens when the Unicorn encounters, for the very first time, the Red Bull. We have previously equated the bull with aggressive and sexual imagery, as well as with menarche symbolism. The latter of course perfectly fits this scene; her first meeting with the (bloody red) Bull physically turns her into a woman. As observed by Molly, the magic could have just as well turned her into any other animal, anything but a unicorn, in order to save her; however, confronted with the Red Bull, she has to give in to the (specific) changes nature has in place for her; “‘[t]he magic chose the form, not I,’ Schmendrick answered. […] ‘If it changes a unicorn to a human being, then that was the only thing to do.’” (Beagle 145).

“*Die Adoleszenz ist eine Periode großer und schneller Veränderungen*” (Bettelheim 214), and these changes can be perceived as uncanny or even threatening. “The girl began to touch her face timidly, recoiling from the feel of her own features” (Beagle 147). The Unicorn’s very first act as a woman is defiance of her new, changed body; she feels herself go crazy, can feel how this new body is dying around her – and leads her aggression against this new physique, hence against herself: “She tore at the smooth body, and blood followed her fingers” Beagle (147).

Even though the Unicorn was referred to as “she” before the change, too, her sex, her being defined as a female, is now much more in the foreground. A female child is also called “she”, yet being a young woman differs from being a girl in lots of ways. The body is a central factor in experiencing and developing the ego-complex, the conscious part of our Self:
The body is the means and medium through which we interact, consciously and on a daily basis, with our surroundings; it is a perceivable part of our Self, and the way the environment reacts to it influences all experiences in the social world. Kast calls „Körperlichkeit [die] Basis des Ichkomplexes“ (Dds 74); the importance of the body cannot be overstated in the development of a notion of oneself. The prevalent perception of bodies as basically male or female of course influences all further perception; every added trait is based on this initial distinction.

As a unicorn, our heroine was not, or not to the same extent, subjected to this split perception and the social expectations connected to being female; now, as a woman, she is subject to several immediate inscriptions: she has to cover herself, wear garments that further define her body and her role; she becomes a potential love object for prince Lir; last but not least, she is given a name (notably, she is named by somebody else).

The most striking change accompanying her new body is her sudden passivity. In many fairy tales, women’s role is to wait (sleeping, imprisoned and guarded by a dragon etc.) for the prince to come save them: “während in [Märchen] Frauen wie passiv darauf warten müssen, durch den Mann ihrer Sehnsucht erlöst zu werden” (Drewermann LLU 176). These are stories of male protagonists searching for their Anima, who is in turn depicted as waiting to be discovered.

As a unicorn, our heroine is active; she pushes the story to go on:

Die Märchenhelden sind fast immer auch diejenigen Figuren, welche den Gang der Handlung vorantreiben. Sie stehen völlig im Zentrum der Aufmerksamkeit, denn auf ihnen lastet die Bürde einer erfolgreichen Bewältigung oft sehr aussichtslos erscheinender Unternehmungen und Abenteuer. (Spring 69)
Especially in the beginning, the Unicorn makes a conscious and brave decision to go and look for the other unicorns (she could just as well stay in her secure forest; there is no immediate threat to her). She is also the leading figure on her travels, even when Schmendrick joins her. Only when she is magically turned into a woman, she gives up any active attempts to further her cause, practically ceases to be the leading figure in her own quest; it is Schmendrick and Molly who take over while she loses herself in the mystery of her new body, fading memories of who she is and emerging human feelings, especially romantic ones: “Even when I wake, I cannot tell what is real […] I remember what cannot have happened, and forget something that is happening to me now” (Beagle 207f).


### 2.8 … meets the prince

Swan highlights how “[p]erhaps one of the most prevalent themes […] in fairy tales concerns sexual maturation – the protagonist’s relationship to the opposite sex and developing awareness of his or her own sexual identity“ (22). While stories about young children deal with parents, separation and acquisition of a social role, “tales with adolescent protagonists mostly concern themselves with sexual maturation and finding a mate” (Swan 27).

This holds true, however, only when we look at the stories from an object-level perspective, where prince and princess are considered to be separate individuals interacting. On a subject-level interpretation, the counter-sexual characters represent complementary aspects of one person balancing his or her Anima/Animus characteristics; this view is held by various authors: „Erzählt wird nicht die wechselvolle Geschichte eines Liebespaares; wie in allen Märchen ist die Geschichte nur auf eine einzige Person konzentriert“ (Drewermann LLU 51); „[d]ie Vereinigung von Prinz und Prinzessin im Märchen darf nie so verstanden
Sexual maturation and identity are certainly at the centre of this process, too; only that it is innerpsychic rather than interpersonal. „[Der] Jüngling ist eine Animusfigur, welche das Männliche in der Frau verkörpert“ (Jung AT&KU 208). The depicted interaction between man and woman is no more than that – a depiction, an image. Only together, wholeness can be achieved: „Jüngling und Mädchen bilden eine Syzygie oder 'coniunctio', welche das Wesen der Ganzheit symbolisiert“ (Jung AT&KU 208). The task at hand, hence, will be for Amalthea to integrate the characteristics of her Animus figure, Lir.

Lir’s interaction with Amalthea is marked by a mix of shyness and careful approach as well as resorting to stereotypical courting behavior. He is no less at a loss with women, with the female, than Amalthea is with men. “I would court you with more grace […] if I knew how. My dragons and my feats of arms weary you, but they are all I have to offer” (Beagle 208).

In his discussion of the Little Mermaid, Drewermann points out how the prince, at their first encounter, is surrounded exclusively by men. He likens this to the practice of archaic societies to keep boys and girls separate when the time arises for them to enter adulthood (LLU 82). In our story, Lir lives with his father, the king, with an ancient magician and a handful of sentries. Not only is this a rather isolated, but also a completely male setup. The all-male sphere of the harsh, grey, ragged castle upon rocky cliffs is now confronted with the female in the form of Amalthea, and Molly.

When trying to get Amalthea’s attention, Prince Lear helplessly sticks to stereotypes. For example, he tries to impress Amalthea by slaying a dragon, an action that has become iconic for the pursuit of a treasure and/or bride, the dragon as an obstacle that has to be overcome in order to achieve one’s goal.
(Becker “Drache”). However, this story is depicting Amalthea’s quest, not Lir’s. She is not the price to be won, the goal to be achieved – she is herself on a journey.

2.9 ... falls in love

We have already mentioned how Amalthea’s attitude changes once she turns into a woman, and her passivity is even increased once she starts to fall in love with Lir. Bettelheim notes a strong tendency for fairy tale heroes, or rather heroines, to be seemingly dead for some reason for a certain time (170). Sleeping Beauty is the most obvious example; Red Riding Hood is eaten by the Wolf, and Snow White “dies” and is put into a glass coffin. The heroines are therefore „zeitweise der Welt verloren [und haben] die Fähigkeit verloren […], mit dem, was weiter geschieht, in Berührung zu kommen und es zu beeinflussen. Deshalb muss ihnen jemand von außen zu Hilfe kommen” (Bettelheim 170).

Amalthea may not die or magically fall asleep, but she is definitely portrayed as in a trance-like state, in between fading memories of her past existence – losing her established identity – and insecurity about new emotions, a state that almost incapacitates her actions. She expresses the explicit wish to be freed of the nightmares in which her past tries to keep in touch: Amalthea (to Lir): “Drown out my dreams, keep me from remembering whatever wants me to remember” (Beagle 209). Schmendrick and Molly, and from a certain point Lir, take over the active role and further the plot.

We are now caught between two competing wishes for the story to continue – on the one hand, the coniunctio, the sacred marriage and harmonizing of male/female aspects are what we wish for, naturally and in accordance with plot lines we are accustomed to; on the other hand, Amalthea’s original quest was a threefold one; saving the unicorns, finding “others like her”, and, most importantly, finding her Self. Can she really abandon this quest for the sake of “love”? And of what nature or quality is this love she is experiencing?
Kast describes what she calls “Verfallsformen” of individuation, ways in which the process can fail. In one of them, a person becomes completely dependent on their partner: “[S]ie können eine ungeheure Hingabe leben, ganz aufgehen für einen anderen Menschen, ihr Ich zurückstellen” (Kast DdS 142). This situation, infamous as “women who love too much”, seems to be established between Amalthea and Lir. “He […] happily invented a life and opinions for her, which she helped him do by listening. […] She began and ended with Prince Lir” (Beagle 214). Kast interprets this form as a limitation of the individuation impulse to the sphere of (one) relationship, lacking the aspect of integration.

What is missing in this scenario is “die Überlegung, was denn dieser Mensch […] im eigenen Leben bedeutet, ob er vielleicht auch Ausdruck für einen intrapsychischen Anteil ist, der dringend benötigt wird, damit das Leben seine Ganzheit hat” (Kast DdS 142). Instead of integrating the characteristics of the Animus/Anima into one’s own wholeness, a person remains reliant on a separate individual to provide these qualities for them, supplementary. Without this significant other, they will always be (or at least feel) incomplete and dependent, unless they start to develop the missing traits in themselves:

Wir leben sozusagen unsere urgelebten [sic] Anteile im Partner aus. […] Wir versuchen durch den Partner jenen Teil unseres Wesens zu ergänzen, der uns bis dahin fremd war. Das ist aber nur der Einstieg in die Beziehung. […] Wichtig ist, daß jeder Partner durch den anderen angeregt wird, jene Anteile, die der andere lebt, in sich selbst zu entwickeln. (Fuchs 89)

2.10… descends to the underworld

In order to find the unicorns, Amalthea has to face the Red Bull in his very own territory; she has to enter “the lion’s den”, which is situated in the caves below the castle. Caves have always been places of cultic or sacred rituals; they are associated with death (darkness) as well as birth (womb). Caves are places where ghosts and demons live, as well as an entry to the realm of the dead (Becker “Höhle”).
The caves can only be accessed through a broken grandfather clock and the descent into mystical fog. Doors and other kinds of portals are “Orte des ‘Durchgehens’, des ‘Hinübergehens’” and are symbolic for a rite of passage from one state of being to another. They are entrances to the underworld and indicate initiation (Hillman 166). But it is not only the place, i.e. the physical clock, that is relevant - „[d]er Held […] hat in einer Mauer eine Pforte, die nirgends sichtbar wird, zu entdecken“ (Eliade EBS 108f) – but the passage must happen “when the clock strikes the right time” (Beagle 197).

This information, given by the castle’s cat, is later expanded on by the skull telling Schmendrick that “[t]he clock will never strike the right time […]. You can strike your own time, and start the count anywhere. When you understand that – then any time at all will be the right time for you” (Beagle 236f). No time is the right time, every time is the right time. „[D]er Zugang zum Hinausgelangen über die Gegensätze […], [ist] nur möglich in dem außerzeitlichen Augenblick“ (Eliade EBS 108f). The Bull's cave clearly exists outside of normal time and space.

Jung comments on this typical and crucial part of most hero myths, the descentio ad inferios, as follows: “The purpose of the decent as universally exemplified in the myth of the hero is to show that only in the region of danger (watery abyss, cavern, forest, island, castle, etc.) can one find the ‘treasure hard to attain’ (Jung JOM 166). „Der Abstieg in die Tiefe scheint dem Aufstieg immer voranzugehen. […] [D]ie Notwendigkeit des Eintauchens in eine dunkle Tiefe […] enthüllt sich als unerlässliche Bedingung höheren Aufstieges“ (Jung AT&KU 28).

One of the most prominent motifs of mythology is that of transformation – in its most extreme form, of rebirth (Campbell 61). This motif is loaded with intense emotional charge, the threat of death. Campbell claims that every passage of a threshold is “comparable to a birth and has been ritually represented, practically everywhere, through an imagery of re-entering into the womb” (61f). „Der Abstieg in eine Unter- und Jenseitszone und die Überquerung des Grenzflusses ist durchgängiges Symbolum aller alten Kulturen und wird durch Märchen und
Epen immer mehr zum personalen einzelnen Auftrag und Erfahrungsbestand“ (Stumpfe 184).

Amalthea finds herself in exactly this motion when she steps through the clock and travels through the caves. Although she is accompanied by Lir, Schmendrick and Molly, it is clearly she who undergoes the crucial transformation – back to being a unicorn. Her turning “back” must not be confused with a step backwards; as we will see later, she may be taking on her old form, but her whole being is transformed through the experiences she made as a human and she is definitely not the same afterwards.

Her turning back is preceded by a rather peculiar discussion, a kind of meta-discourse between the involved characters. They are “aware” that they are part of a story, a fairy tale. They know about the form, the conventions of the genre as regards its plot and ending and discuss which script to follow. Molly argues for the romantic happy ending: “Let her stay the way she is. Let her be” (Beagle 253); and Schmendrick comments, though sarcastically because he fears he cannot change her back any more, that she may as well “[m]arry the prince and live happily ever after” (Beagle 250). The characters find themselves in a dilemma, having to choose between the romantic happy ending and the hero’s successful quest to free the imprisoned.

Amalthea is still, or more than ever, dependent on Lir’s opinion and support. It is his considerations, therefore, that tip the scales. When Schmendrick is almost ready to give up on arguing in favour of changing Amalthea back, Lir makes up his mind and insists on the original quest to be fulfilled. He argues that the heroine cannot abandon her quest midway. It is his understanding of heroism and duty that overbalances his love and desire for Amalthea: “I am a hero. […] Quests may not simply be abandoned; […] unicorns may go unrescued for a long time, but not forever. The happy ending cannot come in the middle of the story” (Beagle 251).

We know, we feel, that freeing the unicorns is the right thing to do, that fleeing into marriage would be cowardice unworthy of a heroine; it is Lir who is strong
in this moment and argues the standpoint which will cost him his beloved. A wide-spread motif in fairy tales is the husband’s, or future husband’s, not recognizing his bride in a different form, which Jones equals with “not having one’s true worth appreciated” (Jones 71). With Lir, this motif is almost inverted; for some time, he does project his own ideas on the passive Amalthea and misreads her behaviour. However, at this crucial point, he fully recognizes her true being and urges her to stand up to the bull – to fulfil her quest and be her true self.

In her altered form and confused, insecure state of mind, Amalthea wants to hold on to the only safety she has found, the safety in her love towards Lir: “I am human, and I love you” (Beagle 249); “I want to die when you die” (Beagle 249). Lir believes that their love can survive, even when she will be changed back – “I love whom I love” (Beagle 248), but Amalthea instinctively knows that the attachment she feels towards Lir is based on her current – inauthentic – form. “I will not love you when I am a unicorn” (Beagle 249). She doesn’t even fear that he will no longer love her – it is the inauthenticity of her own feelings that she is painfully aware of.

In the end, her transformation comes almost as natural as the first; the Red Bull recognizes her even in her changed form and starts charging her. Even if she wanted, Amalthea could not escape, could not hide forever from the forces (of nature) represented by the bull. He is her Shadow; her aggressive yet powerful, sexual and animalistic drives cannot be left to dwell in a dark, hidden cave forever, she has to face them. Lir tries to protect the fleeing lady Amalthea, with his bare hands, when Schmendrick, overcome by magic, changes her back.

2.11 ... fights the Red Bull

The Unicorn flees out of the caves into the open bay, followed by the Bull trying to chase her into the sea, where the other unicorns are captured:

The unicorn and the Red Bull stood facing each other at the arch of the bow, and the unicorn’s back was to the sea. The Bull moved in slowly, not charging, but pressing her almost gently toward the water, never touching
The real turning point in the final fight occurs when the bull runs Lir over, leaves him lying on the ground for the Unicorn to see: “She stood motionless, staring at the twisted body of Prince Lir” (Beagle 264). Seeing Lir defeated and possibly dead, the Unicorn screams in a “wail of sorrow and loss and rage” (Beagle 265). This is the crucial moment in which the tides turn. But what exactly happens?

It is Lir’s weakness, his breakdown that inspires anger, strength and bravery in the Unicorn. Once the projection figure for all the Animus characteristics – “Zielorientierung, Tatkraft, Wille und Durchsetzungsfähigkeit” (Röhr 160f) – fails, she realizes that Lir’s bravery, heroism and courage to fight are attributes she can also find within herself, forces she can muster up on her own. She no longer needs an outside protector to fight her fights for her – she has integrated the Animus-traits that were represented by Lir and stands her ground: „Der Animus erweckt in einer Frau Leidenschaft. Seine Pläne, Absichten und Launen […] bringen sie dazu, […] sich dem Widerstand der Außenwelt auszusetzen“ (von Franz PM 185).

Drewermann makes some interesting comments regarding the danger of dependence in his work about the Girl without Hands; there, a similarly loving king tries to fulfill every wish of his similarly passive bride – thereby keeping her in an immature and needy state:

[S]eine Bemühungen müssen sogar die Gefahr einer […] Abhängigkeit mit sich bringen. So viele Wünsche er seiner Gattin auch erfüllen mag, so nimmt er ihr doch im Grunde damit die eigentliche Aufgabe ab: selber zu lernen, zuzugreifen und eigenständig sich selbst einmal etwas herauszunehmen. […] In seiner Liebe erfüllt er die passiven Erwartungen seiner geliebten Gattin […]; aber auf der anderen Seite hält er sie damit auch passiv. (Drewermann MoH 36)

In the Girl without Hands, the king at some point starts to lose weight – he becomes less weighty, less important. Like Lir, he fails to some degree in his role as caretaker – which is important, because “[a]nders könnte an seiner Seite
niemals jemand sich gleichberechtigt und selbständig fühlen” (Drewermann MoH 41). His weakness is what triggers the heroine’s activity and development. Amalthea, too, might always have stayed a passive dependent had Lir been able to keep her safe; his (near-)death and the hence necessary withdrawal of projections of Animus-characteristics were necessary for her to evolve.

In her anger about Lir’s fate, the Unicorn allows herself, for the first time, to be openly aggressive - „Manche Frauen weigern sich […], aggressiv und schwierig zu sein, und so können sie [den Animus] nicht herauslassen“ (von Franz PM 162f). The Unicorn has overcome this barrier and is now the attacker, not the attacked. Through the integration of these Animus characteristics, yet another development is triggered: the integration of characteristics up to now represented by the Red Bull, her Shadow figure. Anger, aggression and force are now not only in him, but in her as well; by becoming, partially, what he is, by adding these afore missing pieces to her person, she is finally able to face the bull without fear. „[Der Held] muss lernen, seinen gewalttätigen Neigungen wie auch seinen Ängsten ins Auge zu sehen, was durch Begegnungen mit wilden Tieren oder Drachen symbolisiert wird“ (Bettelheim 214).

Again, traits that had to be projected onto a different character because they were fearsome and potentially overwhelming, are now recognized as being inside the Unicorn herself. „Wenn wir unsere eigene Gier, Eifersucht, Boshaftigkeit, Hass usw. sehen könnten, dann könnten sie positiv genutzt werden, weil in solch destruktiven Emotionen viel Leben gespeichert ist, und wenn uns diese Energie zur Verfügung steht, kann sie für positive Ziele eingesetzt werden“ (von Franz PM 117).

The anger releases hitherto unknown, bottled up energies that the Unicorn uses to complete her quest: “[T]he Red Bull fell back without giving battle, until she had stalked him to the water’s edge” (Beagle 266). The story’s finale is indeed a grande one, since lots of things happen almost at a single blow: The integration of the Animus triggers the integration of the Shadow, which is now, in completion of the quest, followed by an emanation of the self in the form of a countless number of unicorns released from the sea.
The sea is, of course, a densely loaded image. The unicorns are described to appear in the waves, almost stepping ashore but still waiting for the Bull to disappear; waves represent water in its moved and vivid, active form and often stand for forces no longer to be held back (Becker “Wellen”). In his entry on “water”, Becker states that it is a very complex symbol, often representing an undifferentiated mass, the beginning of all being (e.g. in creation myths). It is related to physical, psychological and mental cleansing and renewal (baptism, religious ablation). Campbell (61f) as well as Jung highlight that a second birth, a rebirth is often depicted as a “Wiedergeburt aus dem Wasser” (AT&KU 58). “Das Wasser ist (…) ein archetypisches Bild der Mutter, des Ursprungs, der Wiedergeburt im Unbewussten […] ; die Stätte der magischen Verwandlung” (Jung in Drewermann MoH 45). Moreover, water is „das geläufigste Symbol für das Unbewusste“ (Jung AT&KU 28).

The unicorns, i.e. representations of parts of the Unicorn’s hitherto unconscious Self, have been imprisoned in the sea, driven there by their fear of the Red Bull. They were hiding in the sea of unconsciousness, were inhibited the same way the Unicorn was stunted in her development until the decisive step, the integration of the Shadow made it possible for them to surface, for her to develop. “Die Emanation des Selbst ist eine umwältende innere Erfahrung. Sie wird vom Ich-Bewusstsein meist als ein Wiedergeburts erlebnis oder eine Gotteserfahrung empfunden“ (Baumann 10). It is certainly an exhilarating, uplifting moment when all the unicorns are released from the floods and storm off into the world.

2.12... and returns home
The emanation of the Self is, as we have heard, a dramatic, profound experience. The tremors caused by the unicorns' innumerable hooves have made the castle crumble and fall into the ocean; on the beach remain the sobering party of Schmendrick and Molly, an unconscious Lir – and the Unicorn.
Findet keine kritische Abgrenzung zwischen Ich und Selbst statt, so kommt es zu einer Überschwemmung des Ich mit Inhalten aus dem Unbewussten. (Baumann 10f)

They have all been “flooded” by the unicorns’ departure, and it would have been likely for the Unicorn to depart with them – but she didn’t. She was not overwhelmed and swept away by the emanation of “Self”, but stayed back remembering who she is, as a conscious individual (i.e. ego), and who the others are.

Obviously, this story “lacks” the classic happy ending including marriage and living together happily ever after. Is it, therefore, a failed story, a failed quest? Von Franz claims that in the end, after the peak of excitement, Lysis follows, which can be positive as well as negative, or, in some cases, positive with a slight negative edge (PM 31f). The ending of The last Unicorn is certainly ambiguous to some degree. On the one hand, the coniunctio is not achieved, at least not in the form of matrimony. On the other hand, however, the quest is fulfilled; the unicorns are found and freed, and, in the process, Shadow and Animus have been confronted and integrated. The Unicorn’s quest was never for a mate, and so the unfulfilled love-relationship is not a tragic failure.

“Märchen, in denen sich Mann und Frau am Schluss gefunden haben [repräsentieren], daß männliche und weibliche Aspekte unserer Persönlichkeit mit ihrer jeweils sehr speziellen Emotionalität sich zu einer Einheit finden“ (Kast MuF 10). This process, usually represented by the final marriage, is not missing in the narration but merely depicted differently, in the Unicorn’s adaption of Lir’s Animus qualities. The tale’s meaning is expressed in the processes happening during the quest; the final situation is not necessarily the only measure of success:

Anfangs- und Endsituation sind gleichsam die Vorder- und Rückseite derselben Medaille. Der eigentliche Kern des Märchens liegt im Vollzug sämtlicher Interaktionen der darin vorkommenden Nebengestalten mit dem Protagonisten. [...] Das Ende bildet den abschließenden Höhepunkt allen Geschehens, das Erreichen des Ziels oder manchmal sogar die Rückkehr zur Ausgangssituation. (Spring 133)
It would be possible to argue that the retreat back to the Unicorn’s woods is regression; however, after her ordeal, the Unicorn is “not as she had been” (Beagle 260), regardless of the return to her previous form. Her return, the „moving back“, can even be interpreted on the contrary: „Sobald der Märchenheld am Schluss der Geschichte seine wahre Identität (und damit innere Sicherheit im Blick auf sich selbst, seinen Körper, sein Leben und seine Stellung in der Gesellschaft) errungen hat, ist er […] mit dem zufrieden, was er ist und hat“ (Bettelheim 58). Returning therefore actually means recognizing the true worth of her previous existence and form.

We have already commented on the fact that Lir fell in love with Amalthea, who was not the Unicorn “in her real form”, as herself. Their love was, therefore, more or less doomed from the beginning. “[D]ie Beziehung zum Selbst ist zugleich die Beziehung zum Mitmenschen, und keiner hat einen Zusammenhang mit diesem, er habe ihn denn zuvor mit sich selbst“ (Kast DdS 141). The Unicorn had not yet established a sound sense of self, was on the quest to find exactly that – without this relation to herself, a real relation to someone else was not possible. „Um überhaupt zusammenzukommen, ist es erst einmal nötig, sich voneinander zu trennen und (…) frei, unabhängig und selbständig zu leben“ (Drewermann MoH, 40).

As Amalthea, the Unicorn stumbled into a relationship that was characterized by dependence and passivity. Now, she gets a chance to live her new sense of self before, perhaps, entering in romantic bonds at a later point, as her real self „Erst nachdem man selbst zur inneren Harmonie gelangt ist, kann man hoffen, sie auch in seinen Beziehungen zum anderen zu finden“ (Bettelheim 223).
3 Résumé

In this paper, I have tried to present some crucial characteristics of fairy tales, the changing scholarly understanding of their functions and meaning, and to illustrate how they can be and have successfully been interpreted as simulacrums of psychological processes. I have put special focus on the Jungian school of thought and explored some of Jung’s most prominent concepts to a certain depth.

In the second part, I have attempted an independent text interpretation guided by the before examined principles and theories. This presented a great challenge, especially since, as Kast emphasizes, every fairy tale (and in fact, every text) can always be interpreted in a multitude of ways:

Man kann ein Märchen immer auch anders interpretieren. Kriterium einer gelungenen, vertretbaren Interpretation ist für mich, daß die Interpretation in sich einen Sinn hat, daβ alle Einzelzüge unter dem gewählten Gesichtspunkt ein stimmiges Ganzes ergeben oder daβ sie zumindest anregend ist [...]. Eine „richtige“ Interpretation gibt es nicht. (MuF 9)

I very much hope that I have satisfied this criterion set by Kast; I am painfully aware that I was able to reflect only on a tiny fraction of the text, single motifs and situations, but I sincerely hope that the resulting interpretation shows inner consistence and is as persuasive as possible to the interested reader, who is, of course, always free to make up their own mind. Even so I hope that the explanations given in the first, theoretical part, were delivered clearly and easily to comprehend so that they may serve as one possible guideline amongst others for readers’ approaches to fantastic texts.

I would also like to once more comment on my use of the psychoanalytic Jungian frame of thought that has been applied: I am fully aware that whenever we use a fixed, established frame of thought for interpretation, this framework always includes aspects one does not completely agree with, and no concept so far could account for all aspects of a text or even text type. Moreover, it does not postulate any absolute truth that can be claimed inarguably; it can never be more than just one of many ways of looking at things in a systematic way.
I opted for the depth psychological, Jungian-analytic view because Jung’s concepts of the Collective Unconscious, archetypes and his concept of psychological development – individuation – seem particularly fitting to the subject matter. They account for many, and the most crucial, characteristics of fantastic fiction, and have been devised and further developed over decades ever since Jung himself started his framework (which was, in turn, based on previous authors’ works). Even though psychoanalytic readings may not be en vogue in current academia, I therefore firmly believe that this approach has its rightful place and can lead to most valuable insights.
4 Appendix

4.1 Bibliography


Becker, Udo. „Drache“. „Einhorn“. „Elemente“. „Feuer“. „Flamme“. „Höhle“. „Initiation“.
„Meer.“ „Mythos“. „Rot“. „Schmetterling“. „Stier“. „Wald“. „Wasser“. „Weg“.
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4.2 Abstract

English
This paper tries to give an overview of the characteristics, socio-historical significance and psychological functions of fairy tales by looking at features such as structure, set of characters, recurrent motifs and content. It provides some insight into traditional approaches towards fairy tale and myth interpretation, with special focus on the school of Jungian analytic psychology, and shows how well-established concepts such as the Collective Unconscious and archetypes, as well as tools such as amplification, have been applied successfully to fairy tales and mythological texts.

In the second part, the paper will try to show that Peter S. Beagle’s *The Last Unicorn* can rightfully be called a modern fairy tale, and try to illustrate the theory described in the first part by providing a sound interpretation of the tale, revealing the presence of archetypical imagery and narrative structures comparable to traditional fairy tales.

Deutsch

Im zweiten Teil will die Arbeit zeigen, dass Peter S. Beagle’s *The Last Unicorn* zurecht als modernes Märchen angesehen werden kann und es wird versucht, die theoretischen Konzepte des ersten Teils durch eine glaubwürdige Interpretation der Erzählung zu illustrieren, welche das Vorliegen archetypischer Bildsprache und narrativer Strukturen vergleichbar mit jener traditioneller Märchen aufzeigt.
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4.4 Curriculum Vitae

Ausbildung

2005 - 2015: Studium an der Universität Wien: Lehramt Englisch, Psychologie/Philosophie
2001 – 2005: Bundesrealgymnasium St. Martin, Villach
2000/01: Handelsakademie Villach
1996 – 2000: Hauptschule 7 Völkendorf, Villach

Berufserfahrung

2009 – 2014: Bürotätigkeit am British Council Vienna
Kundenberatung via E-Mail, Telefon, sowie persönlich (Deutsch und Englisch); Korrespondenz mit Partnerinstitutionen im In- und Ausland; Raumbuchung und Terminverwaltung; Vorbereitung von Rechnungen für die Buchhaltung, SAP; Pflege des online Prüfungsanmeldesystems und der Webseite; Post und Ablage; Vertretung der Institution auf Messeständen (z.B. BeSt).
Unterstützung bei Planung, Durchführung und Beaufsichtigung der Sprachzertifikatsprüfungen der Cambridge University und des IELTS Tests; selbständige Koordination der Fernstudien-Prüfungen der University of London (Anmeldung von KandidatInnen, Zahlungsprüfung, sichere Verwaltung der Prüfungsunterlagen; Planung von Räumen und Aufsicht etc.)
Sommer 2004 – 2009: Einsatz als Werkstudentin bei Siemens München:
Unterstützung bei der Erstellung eines Trainingskonzeptes in Englischer Sprache zur weltweiten internen Schulung des Sales-Personals; Überarbeitung von Schulungsmaterial (Englisch/Deutsch Korrektur und Layout); Pflege und Ergänzung des Kursportfolios, Aktualisierung von Kursbeschreibungen; Mitarbeit bei der Erstellung und Ausarbeitung von Fragebögen zur Qualitätssicherung der hauseigenen E-Learning-Software

**Kennenisse**

Sprachen: Deutsch (Muttersprache)
Englisch (fließend)
Italienisch (Grundkenntnisse)