Fairytales, Astrology and Enchantment in Relation to Child Directed Creative Play

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Introduction



This paper explores astrological psychology and specific astrological chart indicators. A detailed case study of child directed creative play sessions, demonstrates their application in a therapeutic setting. The child's astrological chart indicates key personality traits which could be matched to the trials and tribulations that beset the leading characters within the fairytale of Cinderella. Insights gained from this exploration together with an understanding of the symbolism of fairytales offers healing opportunities, where the child leads the therapist through a personal interpretation of the fairytale, Cinderella.

Fairytales are as old as mankind itself and in all cultures, people have shared stories from generation to generation. As metaphors for the growth of the soul, fairytales have spiritual significance and meaning and reflect our personal journey of life on earth. (Wilhelm H 2015) They are not stories of rational behaviour but are symbolic of deep psychological, moral and spiritual messages to the soul to guide it on its journey through the trials it will face during its physical life experiences. Through their experiences, the characters in the fairytales demonstrate the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual pressures

the soul will encounter during its contact with the material world; this acts as a guide to help the individual to navigate the tests and trials experienced during physical life. (Jung C 1996)

Astrological Psychology and the Symbolism of Fairytales

Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, was deeply interested in mythology, religion and fairytales. After studying medicine at Basel University in 1900, he graduated with an M.D. from Zurich University in 1902. Paranormal experiences in his childhood led him to delve into the mysteries of the psyche (the soul) which resulted in his incorporating astrology and psychology into his studies. The origins of archetypes appear to go back to the Greek philosopher Plato, who believed that pure mental forms were imprinted in the soul prior to birth. He developed the idea that archetypes are the original models in the non-physical world and that physical forms are copies of these pure thought forms. Carl Jung furthered the concept of psychological archetypes (metaphysical ideas of the nature of reality beyond physical existence) which were influenced by Plato's ideas. Jung formulated four major categories of archetypes; the animus/anima, the self, the shadow and the persona, which are archetypes that feature in fairytales. Jung believed that at the unconscious level i.e. everything that is not at the conscious level of awareness, everyone retains understanding of human experiences and this creates a collective knowledge, which he called the collective unconscious. Jung put forward the idea that a group experience takes place on a lower level of consciousness than the experience of an individual. This is due to the fact that when many people gather together to share one common emotion, the total psyche emerging from the group is below the level of the individual psyche, stating that 'If it is a very large group, the collective psyche will be more like the psyche of an animal, which is the reason why the ethical attitude of large organisations is always doubtful. The psychology of a large crowd inevitably sinks to the level of mob psychology. If, therefore, I have a so-called collective experience as a member of a group, it takes place on a lower level of consciousness than if I had the experience by myself alone.' (Jung C 1991)

Jung described archetypes as the collective images and thoughts that have meanings. These are cross-cultural, appearing in dreams, literature, art and religious imagery and are shared by all people by means of the collective unconscious. In this way, the collective human psyche, or soul, has emerged to form the collective unconscious which influences current human behaviour. Jung also believed that the shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, 'for no-one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognising the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge' (Jung C 1951). In further exploration of the unconscious, Jung found fairytales to be the purest and simplest expression of the psychic processes of collective unconsciousness because their value for scientific investigation of this subject exceeds that of all other material. Fairytales 'represent the archetypes in their simplest, purest and most concise form and in this pure form, the archetypal images afford us the best clues to the understanding of the processes.' (Jung 1951)

In a letter to John Symonds dated 13 October 1951, Carl Jung wrote: 'I know a case in my own experience where children who have been brought up in a too rationalistic way, that is have been deprived of a proper knowledge of the fairy world, have invented fairy tales all by themselves, obviously to fill the gap left by the stupid prejudices of the adults.'

In some fairytales the emphasis dwells on dealing with the shadow (unconscious) side of the individual. Other tales emphasise factors of the animus and anima - the father and mother/male and female images that underpin them. There can also be a focus on a quest to obtain something that is unobtainable, usually in the form of a gold symbol, some form of treasure, achievement or relationship. The shadow therefore is the part of the individual personality that is rejected and suppressed as the conscious mind cannot accept it, thereby becoming part of the personal unconscious and also the collective unconscious.

Jakob Grimm (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859) collected folk tales in response to what seemed to be lacking at the time in Christian teaching,

formerly Paganism; a search for a connection with earlier religious teachings and demonstration of faith. Collecting original fairytales was their quest for a deeper meaning of faith. Each fairytale appears to convey a message for the soul although they are told in various forms across many cultures. The story of Cinderella has over 700 versions throughout the world, possibly having originated in China. In the 17th and 18th centuries, fairytales were told to both adults and children as a form of spiritual instruction.

The Story of Cinderella



This is the story of displacement within the family and sibling rivalry. Cinderella's mother dies and her father remarries. His new wife locks Cinderella in the kitchen where she is forced to live in rags by the hearth that she is to tend, while her two new stepsisters are treated well. The symbolism of tending the hearth (heart) is the fire element of the spirit. Cinderella represents the soul in distress separated from her true family.

In the original Grimm version, one day her father asks the stepsisters what they would like him to bring them back from his trip away from home. They ask for fine clothes and jewels. Cinderella asks for the first twig that hits his hat on his way home. The twig that she plants on her dead mother's grave, grows into a tree in which a white bird lives. The bird throws down to her whatever she asks for and symbolises the air element/mind. Cinderella waters the tree every day with her tears, which symbolise the water element/emotions. The tree represents the earth element. The four elements and the animals in the story symbolise the manner in which the invisible world is made manifest.

Later in the story, a palace ball is thrown by the King so that his son can choose a bride. The stepsisters go to the ball in their finery but Cinderella is kept at home in her rags in the ashes by the hearth, forced to complete impossible tasks if she is to go to the ball. In the Grimm version, the bird throws down her fine

clothes and shoes that enable her to go the ball; whereas in the Perrault/Disney version, birds and animals help and a fairy godmother appears and fulfils Cinderella's wishes by transforming the animals and vegetables (the elementals) into the means for her to attend the ball. However, she loses one of her shoes while leaving the ball. The story culminates in the Prince seeking out the one to whom the shoe belongs and finding Cinderella. They marry and live happily ever after.

Symbolism of the Cinderella Story

Fairytales are ancient folk tales which were collected and adapted for his own children by French author, Charles Perrault, in the 1600s and the original versions of these tales were collected by the Brothers Grimm in the 1800s and put into literature. They deal with esoteric knowledge that has existed throughout all cultures.

In the original Grimm version of the story, the stepsisters are called Ida and Pinga. The deeper spiritual meaning of the story concerns the journey of the soul through its life and the difficulties it will meet. Ida and Pinga represent the distractions (finery and jewels in the story) that the world (the wicked stepmother, the harsh mother, mater, material) will present to be overcome if the soul/Cinderella is to rise up above outer distractions and focus on the inner spiritual life, which would allow sacred energy to rise from the sacral chakra upwards past the ida and pingala nadis towards the crown chakra (the pathway to the royal prince, the Higher Self). In the esoteric traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism, the ida and pingala are key channels, called nadis, which are part of a vast network of energy channels within the subtle energy system of the body. They are known as the two thieves that steal the energy of the soul by diverting attention to enticements of the outer world, instead of allowing the energy to rise from the base chakra up the spine to the crown chakra, in the process of spiritual awakening and spiritual consciousness. Ida, on the left side represents cooling moon energy; while pingala on the right side represents heating solar energy. In the Grimm version, the two stepsisters are blinded by birds which

symbolise overcoming worldly enticements and distractions which prevent us from focusing on the inner spiritual life.

The Prince in this story represents the Higher Self/spirit who seeks reunion with his soul (Cinderella) that is dwelling on earth in a physical body. This is the mystical marriage that the soul yearns for.

The stepmother symbolises the earth, the harsh mother, mater, material. The external world experience sets the soul tasks in order to prevent union with the Higher Self, the tasks are duties and obligations in life, leading to loss of sight of the spiritual life.

Cinderella represents either a spiritual person or the spiritual side of a person, the soul. The stepsisters represent either materialistic people, or the materialistic side of a person. Cinderella and the stepsisters together represent the psyche/soul and the body respectively. The stepmother favouring her own children represents the material world, the harsh mother, favouring those who are unspiritual at the expense of those who are spiritual.

The Prince recognises Cinderella as she is in possession of a gold slipper (glass slipper in the case of the Perrault/Disney version). The marriage of the Prince and Cinderella symbolises the mystical marriage in heaven as the Higher Self is reunited with its soul. The spiritual lesson is that the ego/mind must learn to overcome the enticements and entanglements of the material world in order to make spiritual progress.

The Birth Chart and Fairytales



The birth chart indicates aspects of the personality that may be a particular focus of attention during an individual's lifetime. Areas of imbalance can be revealed through the visual dynamics of the planetary constellations in the birth chart such as over-confidence or lack of confidence that can mar personal performance or willingness to participate in

the opportunities that life provides. An over-dominant personality may produce problems in the same way as a recessive personality. Over-emphasis on or a lack of attention to personal appearance may be revealed. The focus of the spiritual path is clearly indicated in the birth chart, together with any tendencies to focus on issues that would hold the soul back in its spiritual progress in the current lifetime.

Key personality traits can be matched to the trials and tribulations that beset the protagonists of fairytales, such as Little Red Riding Hood which portrays the necessity of the development of discernment. Snow White is required to overcome a tendency to ignore repeated warnings to avoid danger and to not be enticed by objects of vanity. Cinderella is to resist reacting to the jealousy directed towards her by her siblings and also to keep her faith in the benevolence of life, that all will be well in the end. The birth chart therefore demonstrates key personality traits and tendencies which an individual will need to modify or overcome during a lifetime.

The incarnating soul that is at the centre of the planetary dynamic picture demonstrated in the birth chart can take some solace from the telling and retelling of a fairytale of its choice as it is reinforcing the moral of the tale to avoid its pitfalls and to keep faith that others have trodden the same path previously and have overcome its tests and difficulties. It is a story of hope and faith.

Fairytale Play



Play is an integral part of a child's development because children use their play to enable them to function in their world, to understand their feelings and to assimilate their current experience. Children who are emotionally traumatised or physically or cognitively impaired, struggle to make sense of the world around them and may be unable to articulate their feelings. They may express themselves in an extreme

way by 'acting out' their feelings because of an inability to use words. Fairytale play can enable a child to imitate a familiar story and develop their ability to experience a situation from another's perspective and to make decisions based on that awareness. (Tolkien JRR. 2008) Fairytales provide a vehicle that allows a child to practice interaction and social skills and often proves an excellent way of channeling overwhelming feelings through the character the child is portraying.

By re-enacting the story, the child is introduced to moral choices and receives a new and exciting awareness of nature and elementals which may be lost if the character's attention is diverted by the temptations of the outer, external world. The stories illustrate the importance of choice and demonstrate that every action has a consequence. They show how easy it is to be lured away from any form of higher spiritual connection through a preoccupation with earthly pursuits, duties and obligations. Through role play, the child experiences the character's transformation as he or she struggles against the horrors of a current situation, when, after many tests of courage, the character eventually emerges victorious and is rewarded by a happy ending. Children cannot be hidden from the horrors of life because sooner or later they will have to be in the external world. Dealing with its dangers and disappointments builds confidence and self-esteem. Fairytales have the ability to inspire the child to be a better human being, feeling equipped to face what is to come. (Warters J 2004)

By offering a space and providing a few simple props or costumes, children are able to create a role for themselves in their own fantasy world. They are then able to explore what they need to explore in their own way and at their own pace. Through fairytales, children are offered a different perspective on what seems to be an impossible situation, where woodland creatures offer assistance to reach a seemingly unattainable goal.

'The adult's role is to watch, wait and listen without judgement and to engage and take on a role, only if invited to do so. It is of paramount importance that in the play situation the adult follows the lead of the child and does not try to take the story or the child's play where they feel it should go or force the play

to a conclusion because of time restraints' (Warters J 2004). This encourages the child to develop their own locus of evaluation without the imposition of an adult judgement, agenda or opinion.

Through positive and enjoyable playful activities which encourage connection to higher intuitive pathways beyond the cognitive faculties we enable a child to reach a fuller potential. By stimulating the creative intuitive aspects of the right brain the child's own self-healing mechanism is triggered. In a play situation, the child intuitively knows what is required and it is the adult's task to follow their lead.

Case Study

Margaret - aged 10 years.

Margaret was referred for therapy when she was ten years old. She had a bilateral hearing loss and was given hearing aids at the age of five. Her mental, emotional and educational needs were compounded by her physical disabilities. She was unable to use her hands in a functional way, which meant that she couldn't grip objects and had difficulty executing fine pincer movements with her fingers, such as unfastening and fastening buttons, pulling up a zip, holding eating utensils or placing jigsaw pieces in an inset puzzle. She was therefore still dependent on her mother for many of her personal needs. Margaret's mother spoke of Margaret's father as someone who travelled abroad much of his time and was rarely at home. Margaret had an older sister, from her mother's previous relationship.

The child climbed into her parent's bed every night and both mother and child were seemingly dependent on this symbiotic attachment which, with a blurring of boundaries, could cause problems for both in the long term. Margaret's reading was age appropriate but because of poor hand function, she had great difficulty holding a pen to write or draw.

To add to her difficulties, Margaret had had several operations on her feet to enable her to walk. A reluctance to make eye contact and deferring to adults when spoken to added to her communication difficulties together with unclear

speech and restricted language. Margaret became frustrated and angry if she felt that she was not being listened to or not receiving enough attention. The strength of her will and her inability to manage her emotions which often overwhelmed her causing regular outbursts of temper, was indicative of emotional immaturity, which sabotaged any possibility of a relationship with members of her peer group, although her mother was desperate for her to have a friend.

Astrological Chart Indicators

Margaret's astrological chart indicated that she may have a tendency to be selfish in relationships, seeing herself as a priority, although not consciously aware of this. The configuration involving Mars in her birth chart indicated an intensification of this process. Child directed creative play sessions could bring this to the fore and provide a vehicle for healing.

The chart indicated sibling rivalry and a split family through remarriage, Margaret's family history gave evidence of this. Nervousness and tension arising from an unsettled upbringing indicated uncertainty which could possibly give rise to a reactionary and rebellious nature. Play sessions could offer an opportunity to express and possibly resolve some of these difficulties.

Although there was a susceptibility to be insecure and easily discouraged, there was also a potential for Margaret to develop a creative, spiritual and charitable nature if ego conflicts could be avoided. The chart indicated that dynamic and creative energy could enable her to achieve 'imaginative excellence.'

Childhood trauma was indicated in matters relating to home and family with a tendency for past family matters to be shrouded in secrecy. Specific retrograde planets close to each other indicated an intensified 'locked away' energy pattern emerging which Margaret may have difficulty resolving in a positive way until later in life.

Child directed creative play seemed to be the way forward as a means of focusing Margaret's creative energy and as a way of enabling her to break

through the 'locked away' energy pattern which was encasing her in a rigid prison of her own perception possibly skewed by the memory of early experiences.

Margaret's Fairytale Play

As well as weekly creative play therapy sessions with Margaret, there were monthly family sessions with Margaret's parents to talk through Margaret's progress and to focus on the family dynamics in an attempt to strengthen the primary relationship between Margaret's mother and father, which had been supplanted by Margaret's intense relationship with her mother.

In terms of creative outlet, Margaret loved to watch the Disney Fairytale films. These were the sanitized cautionary tales of morality unlike the original Grimm fairytales which are graphic and often gruesome in details. The Disney versions that she avidly watched, followed the form of the fairytales adapted and documented by Charles Perrault. Margaret's favourite was Cinderella and without any prompting, she chose to create her own version of the Cinderella story and continued with this focus in our play sessions for the next six months. In his support of fairytales for children, JRR Tolkien noted that when the child is very familiar with the story, it enables them to gain mastery over aspects of their personality that are too complex and unacceptable for them to handle and it was hoped that the play sessions would offer Margaret help in this way.

Margaret's Casting of Cinderella

Margaret surprisingly cast herself as one of the 'ugly sisters' and this casting remained unchanged throughout the six- month period of play sessions. The second 'ugly sister ' was omitted from the cast and the therapist played other named characters, apart from the Handsome Prince, a key role, that Margaret gave to the largest of the soft toys, an orangutan. In child's play, toy animals are often used to embody various aspects of the child's personality i.e. victim, perpetrator, bully, rescuer etc.

Music chosen by Margaret from a range of instrumental styles and moods, divided the action. She chose each piece of music for the feeling it evoked in her, which she was eventually able to articulate, saying that the music made her feel happy or sad or cross or feeling that she wanted to dance etc. Pieces chosen were Mozart's Piano Concerto Nos 21, Vivaldi's Spring from his Four Seasons, The Blue Danube Waltz by Johann Strauss and the nursery rhyme 'Gee Up Neddy to the Fair'. Choosing music in this way, was a stepping stone towards her being able to understand her own feelings and to express what the characters in the story were feeling and why. The storyline and script followed Margaret's lead, which allowed her to express herself and externalise her own feelings. Swathes of material of varying textures and lengths in myriad colours, provided day-wear and finery for attendance at the Palace Ball.

Margaret's Interpretation of Characters and Action

Margaret relished the dominant role of ugly sister and was extremely critical of Cinderella, taunting her over the loss of her father, keeping her fully occupied with menial tasks and refusing her rest and recuperation. A coach was created and various soft toys provided horses and coachmen. In the ballroom scene, there was much laughter from Margaret as she did her best to dance with the prince ignoring his rejection of her and devoting her efforts to pushing Cinderella out of the way as soon as she arrived. In the ensuing action after the ball, Margaret tried in vain to force her foot into the 'glass slipper' in an attempt to prevent the prince from finding Cinderella who she had locked in a cupboard. The drama escalated when Margaret decided that she (as ugly sister) should be thrown into the dungeon by the prince for being 'unkind' to Cinderella.

Delighting in her rebellious behavior, Margaret obstinately refused any attempt by Cinderella to reconcile and this impasse was only broken by the arrival of Margaret's mother to take her home at the end of the play session. This event required the need for her to be released from her self-imposed prison and Margaret offered a half-hearted 'sorry' to Cinderella before leaving. This same ending was repeated at each play session until, after a period of weeks, Margaret's attitude in the dungeon gradually softened. She became noticeably more agreeable and one day, before her mother arrived to take her home,

Margaret said a meaningful 'sorry for being unkind' to Cinderella who forgave her and invited her to live in the palace with her and the prince and all ended happily ever after.

Outcome

Gaining insights into the character she was playing, Margaret began to manage her emotions in a better, kinder way and to understand the impact of her behaviour on others. At home, positive behaviour was rewarded with creative activities and Margaret's mother noted a lessening of sibling rivalry and fewer outbursts of temper as Margaret's language and vocabulary improved and with only a few lapses, she no longer needed to demonstrate through action, what she was feeling. Her mother had also gained insights into her own needs and acknowledged and accepted her part in compounding some of her daughter's difficulties whilst ignoring her elder daughter and sought the support she needed from her husband to put family relationships on a healthier more balanced footing.

Conclusion

Insights into the child's application of the astrological and psychological indicators from the birth chart gave invaluable guidance when searching for the optimum approach to specialised therapy. Margaret demonstrated that by overcoming her negative emotions to make more positive choices for the benefit of herself and others and using her free will to say sorry and in being forgiven, she achieved the guaranteed fairytale happy ending**.** Through a creative package of play therapy combined with part-time school attendance at a small school, where the curriculum was based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning and collaborative play, Margaret continued to progress for two more years.

However, connection with the family ceased when Margaret's parents made the decision to integrate her into the local comprehensive school. Unfortunately, because of a lack of continuity in specialised support and a lack of appropriate creative opportunity, Margaret's condition gradually deteriorated. Old

rebellious anger patterns resurfaced which were suppressed with medication and a part-time residential placement for Margaret was eventually found.

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Profile of Authors

Jennifer Ann Warters

Extensive experience as a Speech and Language Therapist and clinician, working in hospitals, schools and community settings led to post graduate training in metaphysics and alternative therapeutic approaches. Jennifer held posts as Senior Tutor therapist and as Principal of the Academy of Spiritual Sciences, her innovative approach to working with physical conditions and behavioural problems draws upon a deep understanding of the subtle energy field and the energetic imprints which can indicate underlying causative factors. Regular blogs document memorable client stories with teaching manuals providing an innovative self- help programme for carers and family available as website downloads.

Jennifer offers an international online tinnitus clinic with testimonials validating the positive effect of Toning and Energy Alignment to effect a cure. Jennifer's research is documented and published and has been presented internationally, attracting global recognition.

Sandra Lamb Kilburn

A graduate of the Academy of Spiritual Sciences, Sandra also has extensive experience in patient care within the UK National Health Service. A lifelong interest in the nature of consciousness and personal experience of paranormal events in childhood and beyond led to several decades of personal investigation, therapist training and participation in clinical practice. Medical astrology (traditionally known as Iatromathematics) is one of the sacred sciences, an ancient medical system which preceded orthodox medicine by thousands of years. It is based in the understanding that our bodies are composed of the elements, the building blocks of Creation and that all parts of life are interconnected.

The astrological chart demonstrates the relationship and distribution of the elements within the subtle energy field, indicating where imbalances may be occurring, physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually, to manifest as

physical symptoms within the body. A unique collaboration of medical astrology with applied clinical practice supports colleagues of the Living Memory Research Trust.