

The Snow Queen & The Psychology of Selves

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Abstract

In this paper I will explore the fairy tale *The Snow Queen*, translated from the German of Hans Christian Andersen by Miss Alma Alleyne, through the theoretical perspective of The Psychology of Selves and The Theory of Bonding Patterns, as developed by Drs. Hal & Sidra Stone.

A Brief Introduction to The Psychology of Selves and The Theory of Bonding Patterns

In the early 1970s, Drs. Hal and Sidra Stone developed Voice Dialogue as a method for working with the inner selves/sub-personalities within us. Through their professional collaboration, their work evolved over the next 40 years into a complete theoretical system and sophisticated methodology for working with the inner selves, known and taught internationally as Voice Dialogue, The Psychology of Selves, and The Aware Ego Process.

Dyak (1999) wrote:

Voice Dialogue work is based on the theory of a multi-faceted human personality made up of numerous...selves. These selves, which are also called “voices,” “subpersonalities,” “complexes,” “parts,” and “energies” or “energy patterns,” are real live autonomous “people” in their own right. They have their own feelings, desires, memories, opinions, world views – they are not merely concepts, and this is not therapeutic role playing. Many of these selves have grown up with us our whole lives, taking care of our early survival, our identification as individuals, and our success in the world. These are the “primary” selves which form the core of our personality – in fact we think of them as who we are. Other “disowned” selves have experienced a lifetime of repression, becoming evident only when we lose control and act contrary to character, or more commonly when we project these disowned qualities out onto others, usually those we either overvalue or deeply dislike. Still other selves remain dormant within us and may not be born until later in our lives. (p. 3)

“The ‘Ego’ has always been seen as the directing agent of the personality...[i]t is often described as the executive function of the psyche. It is the ‘I’ that we refer to when we talk about ourselves” (Stone & Stone, 2007, p. 12). The Stones, early in their discovery of these “inner selves” that live within us, found that the Ego is, in fact, a group of dominant, primary selves; we are not the singular “I” that we have thought ourselves to be. “Who we think we are is really a group of selves that we have identified with and these selves become the persona or how we present ourselves to the world.” (2007, p. 11)

The Stones explained that just as we are born into an outer family, we develop an inner family of selves:

As we grow in a particular family and culture, each of us is indoctrinated with certain ideas about the kind of person we should be. Since we are very vulnerable as infants and children...we behave in a way that keeps us safe and loved and cared for. This need to protect our basic vulnerability results in the development of our personality – the development of the primary “selves” that define us to ourselves and to the world. (1989b, p. 4)

They further explained:

The newborn infant is quite defenseless, totally vulnerable, and dependent upon the adult world for its survival. However, along with its basic unique psychic fingerprint, the infant also has the potential to develop an infinite array of energy patterns or selves, the sum total of which will constitute the individual personality. At this point in life, the armoring of our vulnerability and the development of our personality begins. The infant learns that he or she must establish some measure of control over the environment to avoid unpleasantness. This development of control is actually the evolution of the personality. Personality develops as a way of dealing with vulnerability. (Stone & Stone, 1989a, pp. 13-14)

In *The Snow Queen*, we will be looking at psyche’s system of self-organization in relation to these inner selves, these subpersonalities, as they are represented in the fairy tale.

The Looking Glass and the Broken Fragments

Our Fairy Tale begins with a “dreadfully wicked hobgoblin” who “had made a looking-glass which reflected everything that was good and beautiful in such a way that it dwindled almost to nothing, but anything that was bad and ugly stood out very clearly and looked much worse” (Lang, 1897/2008, p. 76). We come to find that one day the looking-glass was dropped and it “broke into a million-billion and more pieces” (p. 76), and,

...each of the pieces was hardly as large as a grain of sand and they flew about all over the world, and if anyone had a bit in his eye there it stayed, and then he would see everything awry...[f]or every tiny splinter of the glass possessed the same power that the whole glass had. Some people got a splinter in their hearts, and that was dreadful, for then it began to turn into a lump of ice. (p. 76)

The fact that the splinters of glass flew about all over the world informs us of the universality of this particular phenomenon, that it is archetypal in nature. The main dominant here is that something happens that upsets/changes the way someone is seeing something that

they perceived as good and beautiful, and suddenly it becomes bad and ugly. And moreover, their heart freezes if a splinter enters into it. The heart with the capacity to feel warmth, love, feelings and connection to and with others suddenly freezes and is now cold as ice, disconnected, impersonal.

These are the initial conditions, the exposition, the threshold of our fairy tale. From a perspective of the Psychology of Selves, this informs us that that we are going to be looking at a tale where we see this enantiadromia, this shifting to the complete opposite. We will come to learn which inner selves/subpersonalities are primary when all is perceived as good and beautiful, and which selves then become constellated when all becomes bad and ugly. In addition, we will see how this enantiadromia impacts relationship, and how the inner selves/subpersonalities in one person interact with the inner selves/subpersonalities in the other.

In essence this fairy tale will be showing us what happens when we get complexed in relationship, reflecting psyche's underlying system of self-organization through The Psychology of Selves, and the individuation journey that is possible when one accepts the call to what the Stones came to call, "The Path of Relationship."

As the fairy tale states, "And now we will hear all about it" (Lang, p.77)

A Little Boy and A Little Girl

In a large town, where there were so many people and houses that there was not room enough for everybody to have gardens, lived two poor children. They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other just as much as if they were. Their parents lived opposite one another in two attics, and out on the leads they put two boxes filled with flowers. There were sweet peas in it, and two rose trees, which grow beautifully, and in summer the two children were allowed to take their little chairs and sit out under the roses. Then they had splendid games.

In the winter they could not do this, but then they put hot pennies against the frozen window-panes, and made round holes to look at each other through.

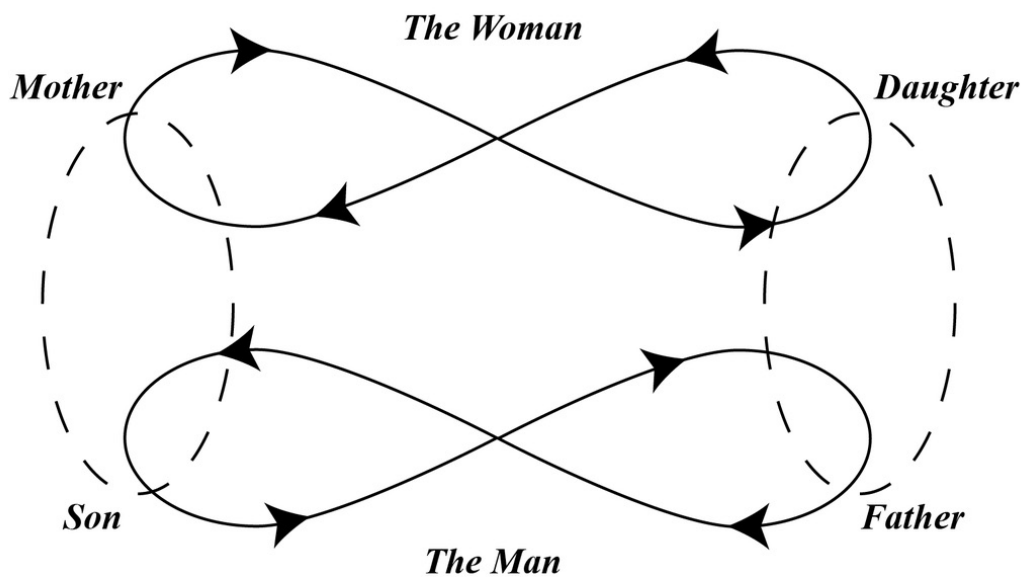
His name was Kay, and hers was Gerda. (Lang, 1897/2008, pp. 77-78)

Here we have the perfect uroboric relationship, it is idyllic, it is the Garden of Eden.

The Stones (2007) in their discovery and exploration of the inner selves involved in relationship, discovered that in all primary relationships, an archetypal bonding occurs that is “basically a set of parent/child interactions” and over the years of continuing to explore these relational exchanges came to recognize the archetypal “bonding pattern as the basic default pattern in all relationships” (p. 14). They discovered the underlying

...activation of [archetypal] parent/child interactions between any two people, that is, the bonding of the [archetypal] child selves of one to the [archetypal] parental selves in the other. For example, the [archetypal] mother self of a woman may lock into the [archetypal] son self of a man, or an [archetypal] father self of a man might bond into the [archetypal] daughter self of a woman. These patterns occur in primary relationships, both heterosexual and homosexual relationships, in familial relationships, in friendships, at work – in short, anywhere two or more people are interacting with one another. (1989b, pp. 70-71).

The basic diagramming method that the Stones developed to map out the archetypal bonding patterns in its basic form is as follows:



A Male-Female Interaction

The Stones (1989b) emphasized that these archetypal bonding patterns are,

...natural, instinctive, and unconscious. It is the way in which we are able to give and receive nurturing. Thus, it represents a most basic unit of human interaction. The [archetypal] bonding patterns that [get constellated] in infancy and early childhood remain with us throughout our lives. They represent the primary way of making contact with others.” (p. 71).

Coming back to our fairy tale, the “mother” self (subpersonality) of Gerda is bonded into the “son” self (subpersonality) of Kay, and the “father” self (subpersonality) of Kay is bonded into the “daughter” self (subpersonality) of Gerda. We are at this early initial stage of the fairy tale looking at what the Stones called a *Positive Bonding Pattern*, meaning the good mother self in Gerda is taking care of the good son self in Kay, and the good father self in Kay is taking care of the good daughter self in Gerda. It is important to clarify here that “positive” does not mean better in regard to these archetypal bonding patterns; it simply means that it feels positive in the sense that both people are feeling comfortable and at ease. “Positive bonding patterns are void of any negative reactivity or arguments. In fact, everyone feels quite agreeable and special” (Pangaia, 2012, p. 120). The Stones explained, “The energy involved in this bonding is the energy which bonds us and binds us to the familiar” (1985, p. 189).

As we continue on with the story, the old Grandmother when it was snowing fast outside said, “Those are the white bees swarming.” And Kay, asking if they also have a queen bee, finds out from the Grandmother that yes, “She flies wherever they swarm the thickest.” Kay is fascinated, and that night looking through the little penny hole in the window, saw her. “[S]he was alive; her eyes glittered like two clear stars, but there was no rest of peace in them. She nodded at the window, and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened, and sprang down from the chair” (Lang, p. 80).

Something has entered into Kay's world that had not been there before, and while beckoned, he is too afraid and returns to his safe, comfortable life. Then Spring comes, and then summer...we are told the roses grew and smelt more beautifully than ever.

The Stones (1989b) explained that in their positive form the bonding patterns generally go unnoticed,

However, one of the interesting things about maintaining the positive aspect of these roles in a bonded relationship is that the negativity in the relationship is generally disowned and tends to remain unconscious. If something happens to trigger one of the couple, the disowned negativity of many years may erupt, either or both...become very angry, and neither of them knows quite what has happened. (p.71)

Braden (2018) explained,

If the bonding pattern is positive in nature, no one objects to anything. There's no negativity, no fighting, because no one talks about problems. No one wants to make waves. However, peace at all costs has its shadow. Relationship without the bumping up against opposites eventually dies of its own inertia and lack of fire. Everybody making nice becomes suffocating and dull. Because the psyche will not tolerate imbalance, as Jung described in the enantiodromia, the flip to a negative bonding pattern...is predictable, if not inevitable. (p. 184)

And this is exactly what happens next in our story. Kay exclaims, "Oh! Something has stung my heart, and I've got something in my eye!" It was one of the tiny splinters from the shattered mirror, "that turned everything great and good reflected in it [bad] and ugly," and began to change his heart into a lump of ice. The Positive Bonding Pattern has been broken, and Kay and Gerda have now entered into what the Stones called a Negative Bonding Pattern. Gerda suddenly loses the "good, warm, loving father" in Kay, and is now experiencing the "cold, judgmental, mean father." He becomes critical of her vulnerability, makes fun of her, exclaims that the roses are ugly and begins pulling them to pieces. Gerda is frightened not understanding what has happened.

The Stones explained that “The negativity and pain we experience when things go sour in relationship lets us know that we have been in a[n] [archetypal] bonding pattern of which we were unaware” (p. 72). They discovered that these negative bonding patterns “grew out of the negation or disowning of vulnerability” (Stone & Stone, 2007, p. 14), and that when this happened, “It very often feels like being kicked out of paradise. There is an almost unbearable feeling of betrayal when a positive bonding pattern is broken, because it involves the loss of a nurturing parent”. (Stone & Stone, (1989b, p.71).

Kay goes off to play with the other boys in the marketplace, and he fastens his sledge to what turns out to be the Snow Queen’s sledge. At first, he is frightened, but she wraps him in her cloak and kisses him, which freezes his heart even more, and he then forgets all about Gerda, his grandmother, and everybody at home. Kay has been seduced by the Snow Queen. From the perspective of The Psychology of Selves, The Snow Queen is the self/subpersonality of the perfect rational mind, completely disconnected from all feelings, all emotions, and capable of ruling the entire kingdom, meaning the entire psychological space of the individual. Whereas Kay found safety and comfort in the positive bonding pattern with Gerda and the Grandmother before, once his vulnerability was triggered by the splinters in his eyes and heart, and the world and his loved ones became ugly and distorted, he aligned with his mind, the rational inner self/subpersonality. This is where he then found safety, predictability and comfort. Our primary selves develop to protect us from underlying vulnerability. Kay’s rational mind stepped in to now become his primary self/subpersonality, ensuring that he would not have to feel any vulnerability, and giving him a logical, rational way to figure out the world. We see an enantiodromia here, the flipping into the complete opposite. He had been in the positive bonding pattern with Gerda where they were always warm, even heating up pennies to melt the snow on

the windows so they could look out at each other, maintaining their connection. Now there was no warmth, only snow and ice. And there was no heart connection, as the rational mind self/subpersonality does not connect at this level, it only connects mind to mind, which is impersonal energetically. All energetic linkage between him and Gerda was now severed. His vulnerability was no longer being taken care of by his life, and by his relationship with Kay and the Grandmother, it was now being taken care of by the subpersonality of The Snow Queen. He has flipped from being the idyllic, happy, loving little boy, to the complete opposite. From the perspective of the Psychology of Selves, this is flipping from a primary self to the disowned self and then disowning the previous primary self that thought everything was good and beautiful.

When looking at The Psychology of Selves in relation to falling in love and what selves get constellated, we have a very clear pattern that unfolds. The falling in love can be with anybody, it can be a romantic interest, it can be with a friend, with a teacher, with a therapist, with a child, etc. When we first fall in love with somebody, the archetypal son or daughter self inside feels safe, feels absolutely loved and unconditionally accepted by the archetypal parental self in the other. All feels harmonious.

This first stage of the fairy tale with Kay and Gerda represents that first stage of falling in love in relationship, that initial stage of paradise, where the other can do no wrong. When something then comes in and destroys that perfect, idyllic state, when the sliver of mirror lands in the eye and/or heart, primary selves of the personality take over to protect the underlying vulnerability triggered. And again, in this case, it is the subpersonality of the rational mind/The Snow Queen that takes over in Kay.

Breaking the Positive Bonding Pattern is likened to whatever it is that sends the hero off on the journey. It is the beginning of individuation, of growth, of finding out who one actually

is. Kay's world had been idyllic, perfect and beautiful and then suddenly everything became bad and ugly. This would be exceptionally destabilizing, leaving him too vulnerable, so he goes off with the Snow Queen, meaning his rational mind becomes his primary self. This self takes care of his vulnerability by cutting off all feeling. The Snow Queen is now what is beautiful to him – the cold, impersonal predictable rational mind. He now looked at snowflakes seeing them as “much more interesting than real flowers. Each is perfect; they are all made according to rule. If only they did not melt!” he exclaims. Kay disappears into this primary self, he completely aligns with this part, now believing this is who he is. And the mind is seductive in this way, just as the Snow Queen seduced Kay...it is that seductive quality of the rational mind that promises you are going to be able to figure it all out with reason.

This part of the Fairy Tale also speaks to how the selves constellate around trauma. Kay demonstrates three of the four trauma patterns: fight, flight and freeze. Initially he is critical and judgmental, finding fault in everyone. This type of subpersonality easily provokes fights with others. He then flees, he goes off with the Snow Queen. When the underlying vulnerability is too overwhelming, evacuation/flight is accomplished by leaving the body and heart where emotions reside and aligning only with the rational mind. In addition, Kay's heart turns into a lump of ice, it freezes, thereby freezing emotion and feeling. Fight, flight and freeze. The rational mind subpersonality is a common primary self that develops in response to trauma in order to keep safe distance from the underlying overwhelming vulnerability that would flood/destabilize the personality otherwise.

So, Kay is off with the Snow Queen, and Gerda has now experienced two major destabilizations. First, Kay becomes critical and judgmental of Gerda and of other people and the world. Gerda's world changes dramatically triggering deep vulnerability inside of her. Then

Kay disappears, the ultimate betrayal. He has left her. We have moved from the classic archetypal Positive Bonding Pattern to the archetypal Negative Bonding Pattern. It is always the negation or disowning of the underlying triggered vulnerability that sets off the Negative Bonding Patterns – it is the fuel that constellates the particular selves/subpersonalities to take over. This is part of Psyche’s self-organizing system, literally in the sense that certain selves get constellated to deal with the overwhelming underlying vulnerability that the individual has not yet learned how to handle/metabolize/contain. What is interesting is this is the relational equivalent to “there is something wrong in the kingdom and the man has to go out on his journey.” Here there is something wrong in the relationship and Gerda has to do the journey, and she has to do it both on the inside and on the outside. So, Gerda’s journey begins.

When a relationship moves from a positive to a negative bonding pattern, typically the first thing a person is tempted to do is go right back into a strong solid Positive Bonding Pattern, and that is exactly what Gerda does.

The Flower Garden and The Woman Who Can Conjure

The first woman Gerda meets on her journey is the woman with the garden who can conjure. This woman makes everything perfect and beautiful...she buries all the rosebushes so that Gerda won’t remember what she was looking for, which is the love, and the beauty and the companionship - the deep connection she had in her relationship with Kay. This woman provides the perfect archetypal mother/daughter Positive Bonding Pattern, she makes everything perfect for Gerda, she is a good, nurturing mother. She offers Gerda all of the most delicious cherries she wants to eat, she combs Gerda’s hair, and she tells Gerda that she can stay with her, and she leads Gerda out into the garden. “How glorious it was, and what lovely scents filled the air! All the flowers you can think of blossomed there all the year round.” She tells Gerda “I

have always longed to have a dear little girl just like you and you shall see how happy we will be together.” It is the perfect archetypal mother/daughter bonding pattern, and it is wonderful, and Gerda begins to think less and less about Kay. In a sense she falls asleep in this safe, comfortable, beautiful state, in identifying with the archetypal good, special daughter.

Dr. Conforti (2003) explained,

As a system or an individual continues to spin within a repetitive mode, the parameters are increasingly narrowed, thus limiting the opportunity for growth. However, in order for a system to maintain fidelity to its original design, in its initial stages of development it must remain refractory to new inputs of information and energy. A major function of replication is to maintain and subsidize the system’s primary design and ontology. Repetition virtually ensures the continuance of a regime, but it does not necessarily create the prompts for new life and diversity. (p. 106)

Bergeron (2008) wrote:

The control and power the Primary Selves bring into an infant’s or a child’s life – while often remaining throughout one’s adult life – come at a cost; they restrict the individual, young or older, into set patterns of behaviors where aspects of the personality, opposites in their nature, are never allowed to express themselves, let alone become a part of the personality. (p.38)

And the Stones (1989a) explained,

[V]ery early in this work it becomes clear that the ego has succumbed to a combination of different subpersonalities that have taken over its executive function...This unique combination of subpersonalities...perceives the world in which we live, processes this information, and then directs our lives. When this happens, our ego has *identified* with these particular patterns. Most people believe that they have free will because *they* choose to do a particular thing and they think that this is really choosing. We have discovered, however, that there is remarkably little choice in the world. Unless we awaken to the consciousness process, the vast majority of us are run by the energy patterns with which we are identified or by those which we have disowned. (pp. 21-22)

It is truly remarkable when we realize the power of these inner selves/subpersonalities, coupled with the underlying archetypal parent/child bonding patterns that get constellated in relationship. The fact that they can completely take over our personality and our relationships is astounding. Our life then becomes a reflection of *their* choices. The implications of this are

profound when we begin to recognize how much of our personal lives and relationships, and by extension our collective experiences and actions, are governed not so much by personal and rational choice, but by these inner selves and the archetypal bonding that happens in relationship.

When Gerda sees the roses painted on the woman's hat and begins to cry, her tears fall. Her tears, her vulnerability, melts the earth over the rosebushes and the rosebushes come up and she remembers home, and then the thought of Kay, and the realization "Oh, what have I been doing? I wanted to look for Kay?" In this moment, the possession of the bonding pattern has been broken and the unconscious identification with the underlying selves constellated in the bonding pattern. Gerda has separated out from her identification with the good, special daughter. She runs out, with bare feet, and no one comes after her. She is bare footed in the fairy tale because she can no longer wear those shoes, the shoes of the good, special daughter. Now she is vulnerable, she is shoeless, she cannot leave wearing the same shoes that got her here, the same selves/subpersonalities. They are representative of that need to stay in the idyllic, comfortable Positive Bonding Pattern...her initial longing to return to the more uroboric container after the one she had had with Kay had been destroyed. "Oh dear, how late I have made myself" says Gerda, "It is Autumn already! I cannot rest!" This speaks to how we fall asleep when unconsciously align with certain selves, replicating the same bonding patterns over and over in our relationships. Time goes by, years can go by...a lifetime can go by. But Gerda springs up and runs on. She is answering the call, now beginning her journey of individuation.

The Prince and The Princess

When Gerda stops to rest, she encounters the Crow who helps her on the next leg of her journey. When in a Positive Bonding Pattern, one becomes completely severed from their

instincts. The selves that are primary in the Positive Bonding Pattern are constantly ensuring that there is no conflict, so any selves/subpersonalities that would be representative of the instinctual are completely disowned. The Crow would represent Gerda beginning the process of reclaiming her natural instincts. The Crow and his sweetheart help her to get to the palace to see if Kay is there with the Princess.

When Gerda finally makes it to the palace and discovers that it is not Kay, we need to look at what has she discovered? What disowned or undeveloped aspect of herself does she find in the Prince and Princess? The Prince and Princess are very clever, sophisticated, rich and entitled in contrast to Gerda being innocent, poor and unprotected. This is an introduction to the world that is completely different than the world she experienced both at home with Kay and the Grandmother and with the Woman with the Garden Who Could Conjure. The Prince and the Princess from the perspective of the Psychology of Selves represent an aspect of Gerda's psyche that has been completely disowned or undeveloped. Sophistication, worldliness, cleverness, entitlement.

The Prince and Princess fall in love with her and her story.

The next day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and satin. They wanted her to stay on in the palace, but she begged for a little carriage and a horse, and a pair of shoes so that she might go out again into the world to look for Kay.

They gave her a muff as well as some shoes; she was warmly dressed, and when she was ready, there in front of the door stood a coach of pure gold, with a coachman, footmen and postilions with gold crowns on.

The prince and princess helped her into the carriage and wished her good luck.

Gerda begins the process of integrating the Prince and Princess selves she has disowned, but she overidentifies with them as represented by her being dressed head to foot in silk and satin, and given the pure gold coach with a coachman, footmen and postilions with gold

crowns on. Once again, we have an enantiodromia, a flipping to the complete opposite. Gerda needs to reclaim the generative aspects of these disowned/undeveloped parts of her, but to now identify with them results in inflation.

On another level, what Gerda is facing in finding out that this is not Kay, is that this is not this perfect, prince and princess from the fairy tales' type of relationship she has with Kay. This is an ordinary story, Kay and Gerda are ordinary people - they are not kings and queens, and Kay is not the brilliant hero for the fairytale who wins the beautiful princess. They are an ordinary couple.

But the Prince and Princess help her, and again, they give her what they have to give which is worldliness, sophistication, cleverness and entitlement. But they inflate her in the process, which inevitably invites the opposite, which our fairy tale will now address.

The Little Robber Girl

They came at last to a dark wood, but the coach lit it up like a torch. When the robbers saw it, they rushed out, exclaiming, 'Gold! Gold!'

They seized the horses, killed the coachman, footmen and postilions, and dragged Gerda out of the carriage.

Gerda is stripped of any and all over-identification with the Prince and Princess parts of herself, any and all inflation, and is now facing her most disowned self of all, the Little Robber Girl. The Little Robber Girl knows how to get what she wants, even if that means killing. She doesn't have great concerns about what is right or wrong and whether she is entitled to anything or not. When she hears Gerda's story, she also wants to help Gerda along in her journey. From the perspective of the Psychology of Selves, we recognize that all selves at their core have something generative to contribute to our personality and navigation in the world. The Little Robber Girl has street-smarts, and she carries impersonal energy versus the personal energy of

the good girl/special daughter. She knows how to survive in the world and how to do whatever it takes to ensure survival, including stealing and killing.

In addition, we have more animals showing up, more integration of instinctual energies, through the wood-pigeons and the reindeer, who are able to bring guidance as to where to next go to try and find Kay. The instincts provide an orient that is not available when we are cut off from them. The Little Robber Girl from the perspective of *The Psychology of Selves* is the self that was buried/disowned inside of Gerda as a result of the primary self she had developed as the good, special daughter. In Jungian terminology, an aspect of her shadow.

The Little Robber Girl gives Gerda all that she needs for the next part of her journey, what Gerda needs to get along in the world. And she is the one that says that Gerda has to keep the fur boots that the Princess gave her, that is the healthy entitlement Gerda is taking with her versus the inflationary entitlement that comes from overidentifying with the Prince and Princess.

The robber girl lifted little Gerda up, and had the foresight to tie her on firmly, and even gave her a little pillow for a saddle. "You must have your fur boots," she said, "for it will be cold; but I shall keep your muff, for it is so cozy!" But, so that you may not freeze, here are my mother's great fur gloves; they will come up to your elbows. Creep into them!

And the Little Robber Girl gives her some bread and sausage for her journey, and off she was on the reindeer to Lapland.

The Lapland Woman

They stopped by a wretched little house; the roof almost touched the ground, and the door was so low that you had to creep in and out.

There was no one in the house except an old Lapland woman who was cooking fish over an oil-lamp.

Upon hearing the story of what brought Gerda here thus far, the Lapland woman said,

'Ah you poor creatures! [You] have still further to go! You must go over a hundred miles into Finland, for there the Snow-queen lives...I will write some words on a dried

stock-fish, for I have no paper, and you must give it to the Finland woman, for she can give you better advice than I can’.

And this is precisely what the Lapland woman did, and then tied Gerda securely back on the reindeer’s back, and off they were again.

From the perspective of The Psychology of Selves, this woman would represent the earthy part of Gerda. Not the innocent “everything is all roses without thorns”, but the one who knows how to live on the earth, and it is ordinary earth, the opposite of royalty. She represents earth wisdom. Not a woman who knows how to deal with the complexities of the modern world, but she knows what she knows, and she knows what she doesn’t know. She knows the earth and where to go to find what you need.

And when Gerda was warmed and had had something to eat and drink, the Lapland woman wrote on a dried stock-fish, and begged Gerda to take care of it, tied Gerda securely on the reindeer’s back, and away they went again.

The Finland Woman

The whole night was ablaze with northern lights, and then they came to Finland and knocked at the Finland woman’s chimney, for door she had none.

“Throughout European folklore, the hearth and chimney serve as a sort of in-between space linking the earthly world with the spirit world” (Lewith-Freeman, 2017). The Finland Woman from the perspective of the Psychology of Selves would represent the Inner Wisdom Voice.

Yes, she is connected to the earth, but also to what comes from above, from the world of spirit.

This is where the reindeer says to her, ‘You are very clever...[c]annot you give the little girl a drink so that she may have the strength of twelve men and overcome the Snow-queen?’

‘The strength of twelve men! said the Finland woman; that would not help much. Little Kay is with the Snow-queen and he likes everything there very much and thinks it the best place in the world. But that is because he has a splinter of glass in his heart and a bit in his eye. If these do not come out, he will never be free, and the Snow-queen will keep her power over him.’

The reindeer asks, ‘But cannot you give little Gerda something so that she can have power over her?’ And the Finland woman says,

I can give her no greater power than she has already; don’t you see how great it is? Don’t you see how men and beasts must help her when she wanders into the wide world with her bare feet? She is powerful already, because she is a dear little innocent child. If she cannot by herself conquer the Snow-queen and take away the glass splinters from little Kay, we cannot help her! The Snow-queen’s garden begins two miles from here. You can carry the little maiden so far; put her down by the large bush with the red berries growing in the snow. Then you must come back here as fast as you can.

The Finland woman is the part of Gerda that carries the final wisdom needed in her individuation journey, to claim her own power that is the result of answering the call – having been willing to face and integrate the parts of herself that had been disowned, were undeveloped and unavailable to her. By getting in touch with these parts of herself, she has received all of the support that she has needed to get this far on her journey, and she has gained wisdom that comes from being able to resource more of herself. It is now up to her and her alone to try and conquer the Snow Queen and take away the glass splinters from Kay.

Then the Finland woman lifted little Gerda on the reindeer and away he sped.

‘Oh, I have left my gloves and boots behind!’ cried Gerda. She missed them in the piercing cold, but the reindeer did not dare to stop. On he ran till he came to the bush with red berries. Then he set Gerda down and kissed her mouth, and great big tears ran down his cheeks, and then he ran back. There stood poor Gerda, without shoes or gloves in the middle of the bitter cold of Finland.

Gerda once again must face her vulnerability, a core theme of this fairy tale, the opposite of Kay and the Snow Queen, where there is no vulnerability, only cold, impersonal, rational mind. But she has integrated these other parts of herself that she has met along the journey and she is not the same Gerda that began. It is because of her capacity to stay in touch with her vulnerability that she stays connected to the part of her that is innocent. But this is not the innocence of the child sitting on the rooftop with Kay. She is deeply engaged in the process of

individuation and evolving as a woman, she now has access to power and has been learning to navigate the vicissitudes of life, she can be in touch with both her vulnerability and her power. Separating out from the primary selves she had been overidentified with and integrating the parts of herself that she had disowned, has brought greater wholeness. The innocence that she carries forward is not the naïve innocence of a child, it is more like the innocence of the one who can see the emperor who has no clothes on. The innocence that allows the truth to be seen. Vulnerability that allows one to be in touch with their humanity and share it, versus Kay who has lost his connection to his vulnerability, to his capacity to connect with others...he only has his rational mind which he loves for that is what keeps him safe, that is the world that is predictable to him. And this works for him, and a good rational mind is needed to help navigate the world and relationship, but he is overidentified with his mind, cut off from the other selves/subpersonalities that are needed for wholeness and connection...so he finds himself alone, completely cut off from his heart and feelings and from relating to others.

The Snow Queen's Palace and What Happens After

Little Kay was almost blue and black with cold, but he did not feel it, for she had kissed away his feeling and his heart was a lump of ice.

He was pulling about some sharp, flat pieces of ice, and trying to fit one into the other. He thought each was most beautiful, but that was because of the splinter in his eye. He fitted them into a great many shapes, but he wanted to make them spell the word 'Love.' The Snow-queen had said, 'If you can spell out that word you shall be your own master. I will give you the whole world and a new pair of skates.'

But he could not do it.

'Now I must fly to warmer countries,' said the Snow-queen.

And off she flew, and Kay sat alone in the great hall trying to do his puzzle.

He sat so still that you would have thought he was frozen.

Then it happened that little Gerda stepped into the hall. The biting cold winds became quiet as if they had fallen asleep when she appeared in the great, empty, freezing hall.

She caught sight of Kay; she recognized him and ran and put her arms round his neck, crying, 'Kay! dear little Kay! I have found you at last!'

But he sat quite still and cold. Then Gerda wept hot tears which fell on his neck and thawed his heart and swept away the bit of the looking-glass. He looked at her and then he burst into tears. He cried so much that the glass splinter swam out of his eye; then he knew her, and cried out, 'Gerda! dear little Gerda! Where have you been so long? and where have I been?'

And he looked around him.

'How cold it is here! How wide and empty!' and he threw himself on Gerda, and she laughed and wept for joy. It was such a happy time that the pieces of ice even danced round them for joy, and when they were tired and lay down again they formed themselves into the letters that the Snow-queen had said he must spell in order to become his own master and have the whole world and a new pair of skates.

The possession is broken, and Kay has separated out from his identification with the Snow Queen, his cold, rational mind. Gerda's love, compassion and vulnerability thawed his heart and swept the bit of looking glass from his eye. This is not an attempt on Gerda's part to return to the Positive Bonding Pattern, because she has grown/evolved as a result of separating out from the special good daughter and facing and integrating the parts of herself that had been disowned and unavailable to her. In relation to the archetypal bonding, she is not going in as the good mother trying to save the little boy. She is not the needy daughter looking desperately for daddy. She is able to see Kay for who he really is versus when you're identified with a self you are looking through the eyes of that self and you are not seeing the whole person. It is her ability to be in touch with her vulnerability and her power, that this journey has brought her, that enables Gerda to cry the tears that break the possession in Kay, his identification with the Snow Queen, his rational mind. He bursts into tears, reconnecting with his own vulnerability...wondering where Gerda has been for so long, and where he has been. Again, this speaking to how much

time can pass when we are unknowingly identified with a subpersonality, thinking it is who we are, not realizing that an inner self is running our life and relationships.

And to come full circle, the reason this connection to vulnerability is so necessary, is that it is the negation and disowning of vulnerability that fuels the negative bonding pattern, that sets it in motion. A primary self takes over in response to the underlying vulnerability that has been triggered. This is the splinter getting into our eye and our heart, this is the moment we become “complexed”. This is the moment the relationship has entered into the field of the hobgoblin, where everything that was good and beautiful about the other person and the relationship now becomes the opposite, bad and ugly.

Once Kay is back in touch with his heart and his vulnerability and his connection to Gerda, they are able to form the word LOVE, which now meant that he could become his own master.

Looking at this both from the standpoint of the outer relationship of Gerda and Kay, as well as Kay as an inner self/subpersonality of Gerda, this is the final self that Gerda integrates – her inner male now being able to have a heart and be a partner to her rather than only a frozen, disconnected rational mind. This is a healthy male with a good mind that she can now resource along with the rest of the selves she has come across and integrated on this journey, versus a mind that must stand alone and rule/possess the entire personality, freezing such that contact with other selves, other aspects of the personality, and with one’s heart and vulnerability, are not possible.

And in relation to the outer Kay, as they journey back home and meet back up with the subpersonalities that Gerda had met along her way to finding Kay, Gerda is now taking these parts home with her, these selves that were unavailable to her as an innocent child when she was

back on the rooftop with Kay. And that is why when they step through the doorway back home, they find that they have grown up. Both Gerda and Kay have integrated the parts of their psyche, their personality, that they had been cut off from; they have each come into a greater state of wholeness in their own unique way and can return to the “home” of their relationship with the capacity to now navigate the personal and relational terrain with greater maturity and choice.

When they are next faced with the Hobgoblin’s glass splinters and one or both of them becomes “complexed”, they have an orient, a map. They have a way to explore and identify what underlying selves get activated, what underlying vulnerability is being negated/disowned, and what archetypal bonding patterns are being constellated. They can continue to use The Path of Relationship to further their individuation process both as individuals as well as within the vessel of their relationship.

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