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Marrying Mr. Rochester: Redeeming the Negative Father Complex

Lisa Marchiano

Injurious childhood experiences with one's personal father form the psychic bedrock of a negative father complex: never good enough. This complex has a part that is exciting and uses hope as its hook, and a part that disappoints and persecutes. The negative father complex can be imaged as the ghostly lover, as depicted in the fairy tale "The Singing, Springing Lark" and in Charlotte Brontë's life and famous novel, *Jane Eyre.* The ghostly lover holds a woman's creative energies hostage to the tantalizing possibility of being the special one who can redeem the negative masculine and win his love.

To heal a complex, its contents must be personified, or imaged, so that an individual can come into conscious relationship with it. The tale of the "Singing, Springing Lark" illustrates collective roots and images of healing a wounded relationship with the masculine. Charlotte Brontë transformed her relationship with the ghostly lover through her novel *Jane Eyre*, with Mr. Rochester as the image of her own wounded, bewitching masculine energy. Brontë herself was subsequently able to marry, despite her father's objection, overcoming her negative father complex. The fairy tale, novel, and Brontë's life show that several attempts are usually necessary to bring the complex to light. Although consciousness seeks redemption through its pursuit of the masculine, the complex also—mysteriously—seeks its own transformation. Ego alone cannot fulfill the mission of individuation; the Self must aid the process.

When I was a young child, I had a record with the story of "Beauty and the Beast." I recall sitting in my room for hours and listening to that story again and again. There was some other story on the reverse side of the record, but it was this tale of the girl abandoned by her father to meet her fate with the monster that compelled me time after time. Years later, the summer of my 14th year, I picked up the novel *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë. I was enthralled. Orphaned and despised, but feisty and resourceful, Jane immediately captivated me. I inhabited that novel as I have rarely inhabited another before or since. What is more, the power of *Jane Eyre* did not wane for me. Subsequent rereadings have thrilled again, and I have been curious about its particular hold on me. Upon reflection, I have come to realize that my fascination with "Beauty and the Beast" as a young child and my love of *Jane Eyre* as an older child had a common taproot in a wounded relationship with my father.

A negative father complex in a daughter typically originates from injurious childhood experiences with one's personal father. He may have been harshly judgmental,

angry, or rejecting—or withheld love and affirmation, made performance the basis of acceptance, or appropriated his daughter's beauty and talents. In all these ways, "never good enough" is the psychic bedrock of a negative father complex. This complex may make it difficult for us to trust ourselves as essentially good and competent. It may damage our sense of basic worth and cripple our ability to live authentically in the world. When it is strongly negative, the complex is rooted in the archetypal world, but punitively denies us its riches.

A negative complex has a part that is exciting and keeps us hooked by hope, and another part that disappoints and persecutes. If the exciting part predominates, the negative father complex is often experienced as an irresistible attraction to a wounded or magical masculine figure tragically cut off from normal human life. This may manifest as an inner dynamic where a woman is so fascinated with her inner world that she becomes isolated and lonely, or it may manifest as an attraction to a seductive yet unavailable outer lover who likewise keeps a woman cut off from life. Charlotte Brontë's sister Emily is an example of the victim of the former kind of enthrallment. Emily had mystical experiences of communing with her male muse. In her poetry she addressed him as "Angel," "God of Visions," and "Phantom thing." Emily formed few close attachments beyond her sisters and the members of her immediate family. When she joined her sister Charlotte to teach at a boarding school away from home, Emily pined for her beloved moors so acutely that Charlotte feared for her sister's health. Emily's psyche turned inward, oriented toward her inner world, and choosing to renounce the outer.

The ghostly lover—whether inner or outer—holds a woman's creative energies hostage to the tantalizing possibility of being the special one who can redeem him and win his love where others have failed. When we are in thrall to the ghostly lover, our psychic world shimmers with the magic and mystery of "him." The real world pales. The seductive ghostly lover is a possessive, destructive demon feeding on a woman's energy, autonomy, and ego. Such tales—and life histories—usually begin with a father wound and almost always include some sacrifice of the child by the father.

To transform this kind of complex, we must confront it in the original sense of that word, where *frons* means *forehead*, and *con* means *with*. Standing forehead to forehead with these inner personalities leads to their transformation and serves individuation. Confrontation requires creative engagement. We must neither surrender to the demands of the complex nor defend ourselves against it. Willingness to *relate* to the complex is necessary. Jung states: "A complex can be really overcome only if it is lived out to the full. In other words, if we are to develop further we have to draw to us and drink down to the very dregs that, because of our complexes, we have held at a distance" (1959, pp. 98–99). Jung does not mean that we should *enact* our complexes, but rather dialogue with them and engage them emotionally, becoming conscious of them in a fully felt way.

> Part of Jung's genius was recognizing that inner contents needed to be personified, or imaged, so that we can come into relationship with them.

Our complexes await us at every turn in the road, posing the same painful and seemingly insoluble questions, but we must not avoid them. Staying in relationship to the complex is critical for transformation. We can't be in relationship to anything if we are either identified *with* it or walled off *from* it. Part of Jung's genius was recognizing

that inner contents needed to be personified, or imaged, so that we *can* come into relationship with them. This is the idea behind active imagination. Etymologically, the word *imagination* comes from the Latin root that means "to form a mental picture of." When our complexes take on imaginal forms, we can converse with them and have it out with them. This interaction helps us to mourn and release the idealized, exciting aspect of the ghostly lover complex and the fantasy of redemption through fruitless self-sacrifice.

Now let's consider how a ghostly lover complex can be transformed. A Grimm's tale, "The Singing, Springing Lark," provides an archetypal context for understanding a father wound and its manifestation as the ghostly lover. We will also consider Charlotte Brontë's life, her novel *Jane Eyre*, and some brief clinical examples to illustrate how the ghostly lover has the potential to be healed through an encounter between the ego and positive energies in the unconscious that lie behind the wound.

The Singing, Springing Lark and the Father Wound

"The Singing, Springing Lark" is the Grimm's version of my beloved childhood favorite "Beauty and the Beast." Both tales deal with the negative father complex and its transformation. A father about to set forth on a long journey asks each of his three daughters what gift they would like. The eldest asks for pearls, the second for diamonds, and his youngest daughter asks only for a singing, springing lark. The father easily purchases the pearls and diamonds, but can't find a lark anywhere. On his return journey he passes through a forest, in the midst of which is a splendid castle. In a tree he spies a lark. When he climbs up to get it, however, a lion jumps out of nowhere, roars, and says, "I will eat up anyone who steals my singing, springing lark."

The father begs for mercy, but the lion replies that to pay for the lark he has stolen, the merchant must bring the lion that which first greets him when he returns home. The father agrees, and predictably it is his youngest daughter who comes running to greet him. He tearfully tells her the deal he made with the lion, and she immediately agrees to sacrifice herself for her father's sake. When she arrives at the lion's castle, we learn that the lion is actually an enchanted prince. By day he and his people are lions, but at night they regain human form. The lady and her lion lover are married with great ceremony and live together quite happily, although their lives are conducted under cover of darkness, always at night.

After some time, however, the lion tells his wife that her oldest sister is getting married. She attends the wedding, and her family is overjoyed to see her, because they thought the lion had killed her. She tells them how happy she is and what a handsome husband she has. After she returns home, the lion soon tells his wife about her second sister's wedding, and she says, "This time I do not want to go alone. You must come with me." The lion protests that this is too dangerous for him, for if a single ray of light were to fall on him, he would be transformed into a dove for seven years. His wife promises to protect him from light, and they go.

The lion stays in a room with thick walls to shield him from light, but—of course—there is a tiny crack, and a ray of light falls upon him. When his wife goes to him, she finds a dove in place of the lion. The dove tells her that he must fly about the world for seven years, but that he can be redeemed if she follows after him. She does so, and at the end of this time, she joyfully looks forward to his redemption, only to discover that the dove is gone.

Our heroine realizes that this situation is now beyond human help, so she asks the sun, the moon, and the east and west winds whether they have seen a dove. They have

not, but each gives her a gift that she is to open in case of great need. The south wind, however, has seen the dove—now a lion once again, captive in a faraway land, and fighting with a serpent who is really an enchanted princess. The south wind tells her how to help her husband and change both him and the serpent/princess back into human form. After she does so, she and her husband must jump on the back of princess's griffin and fly away.

The lady follows the south wind's instructions, but when the lion and serpent regain their human forms, the princess grabs the prince, and they both get on the griffin's back and fly away. The brave, resourceful wife doesn't despair. She packs up her gifts, again follows the south wind's directions, and at last comes to the castle where her husband and the princess are living together. She hears that the two of them are to be married. The lady uses the gift from the sun to tempt the princess into agreeing to let her spend one night with her husband. The possessive princess, however, gives him a sleeping potion, and allows the true wife in only after he is asleep. She sits down on the bed beside her husband and says, "I have followed you for seven years. I have been to the sun and the moon and the four winds and have asked about you, and I have helped you against the serpent. Will you then forget me entirely?" But the bridegroom doesn't wake.

The next day, the lady breaks open the egg that the moon gave her and finds within a golden hen and 12 chicks. These she also exchanges for another night with the prince, who has poured out the sleeping potion and stays awake. When his beloved is brought to him that night, he recognizes her. They leave the castle secretly, mount the griffin, and are carried home to live happily ever after.

This convoluted tale has much to tell us about how a father wound manifests as a ghostly lover complex, and how it can be redeemed. The tale begins with three daughters and a father. The maternal is absent. This familiar fairy tale situation, where the father asks his daughters what gifts they would like, illustrates a psychological situation in which the attachment between the father and his daughters is based on narcissism. It is like the modern father who is frequently away on business and spends money on his children instead of spending time with them. The father in the tale promises materially valuable gifts, and the two eldest daughters "buy into" their father's narcissistic attitude by choosing items that appeal to their vanity. Filial love is a transaction to them. The youngest daughter, however, clearly wants something more: The lark she requests signifies a spiritual value.

> The ghostly lover can work his magic only in shadow and darkness, but something in the psyche is not satisfied with life in darkness and presses for manifestation in the daytime world.

As in many ghostly lover tales, the daughter is sacrificed on behalf of the father. This was the case with a young woman I worked with who had an abusive father. Liza was intelligent and hardworking, and had built a career for herself as a Web designer. In spite of her apparent adaptation, she was unable to protect herself from wounding romantic relationships. She badly wanted a loving partner, but she repeatedly made poor choices in men that left her feeling bereft and retraumatized. She was continually seduced by the relentless hope that her lovers could meet her need for a soulful relationship that her father had not provided—represented in the tale by the lark—and was delivered again and again to the beastly complex.

Our fairy tale heroine willingly sacrifices herself, a psychological representation of the ego's willingness to engage the complex, as if the ego believes that this is where her destiny lies. She neither defends herself nor collapses, but faces the situation with equanimity. This response bodes well, because as we noted earlier, a nondefensive confrontation with the complex serves individuation and can result in creative transformation of the complex.

The lion represents the fearsome, mysterious, and alluring inner masculine cut off from humanity, having been put under a spell. He is a kind of ghostly lover. The danger is that the woman will be seduced into remaining in the enchanted world of the lion, unable to forge real relationships in the outer world. We hear this danger in the tale. Her life with the lion is indeed full of magic and beauty, but she can only live it in darkness. She has a relationship with the masculine that has no place in the conscious world of daylight.

The weddings of the sisters force the development of the story—and the psyche. The second time a wedding invitation is issued, the ego demands a little more than it did the first time. The ghostly lover can work his magic only in shadow and darkness, but something in the psyche is not satisfied with life in darkness and presses for manifestation in the daytime world. Although the "lion" resists "coming to light," the complex also mysteriously seeks its own transformation. After all, it is the lion that tells his wife of both sisters' weddings and then agrees to attend.

This is the story of Kate, 40 years old, and married to her current husband for nearly fifteen years. Kate is pretty, petite, and polished. She dresses in fashionable, feminine clothes that seem more appropriate for someone much younger than herself. She has had one affair after another with alluring, unattainable men. Kate came to therapy saying that she wanted to find a way to either commit to the marriage or make a firm choice to leave. Her ambivalence, however, is powerful. Recently, I noted that a part of her was happy with how her life was now arranged. "Yes," she cheerily concurred. "My life is unconventional, but it really is okay." Then she melted into tears. "It's not okay!" she said through her sobs.

Like the situation in the tale, part of Kate's psyche is happy with her shadowy lovers. Another part knows that she needs to reconcile the split-off parts of herself and bring them together in consciousness if she is to live authentically. Neither the fairy tale lady nor the real-life patient can live with her lover in the dark any longer. The wood door—the defense—has cracked, and the illumination of truth has pierced the unconscious. The lion has become its opposite, a dove.

The lion's wife follows the dove for seven years, and at the end of this time, she joyfully looks forward to his redemption, but it is not to be—not yet. The heroine of our tale, exhausted by years of tasks, travels, and travails, must eventually put her faith beyond ego consciousness: "Humans cannot help me now." Ego alone cannot fulfill the mission of individuation. When the ego has lost all other supports, it must lean on the Self, which in the tale is represented by the sun, the moon, and the winds.

We next see that the ghostly lover has resumed his lion form. This representation of the heroine's own cut-off, bewitched masculine energy is now locked in opposition against an enchanted princess in serpent form, an image of the feminine shadow. Herein lie the aggression, sensuality, selfishness, and other qualities banished from acceptability in the feminine psyche. These are especially split off in the psyche of a woman who has a father wound. She bends herself to please him, hiding away those qualities that could enliven her (but displease him) and give her authenticity. It is because these inner qualities are split off and unavailable to the ego that they have ensorcelled the inner masculine. The heroine will need to reclaim and integrate these shadow qualities if she is to heal the negative complex.

The resolution comes about with the golden hen and her chicks, images of the positive mother. The negative father wound is ultimately healed by finding the positive, nurturing feminine, whether found in an actual outer maternal figure, in ourselves, or in the transpersonal realm. In the end, the tale teaches, the wounded masculine in a woman needs a renewed relationship with the feminine: access to her own generative golden hen and chicks. But the lady also had to integrate some of the shadowy feminine, portrayed as the defeat of the conniving, possessive serpent princess. We know that the heroine has access to this energy because her final act in the tale is to command the princess's magical griffin.

As a footnote, I find it interesting that the princess's father is a sorcerer, arousing suspicion that he might be behind all of the odd bewitchment in the story. At the end, the tale folds back on itself, and we wind up where we began: with a negative father.

Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre, and the Father Wound

Charlotte Brontë's life and novels—peopled with brooding, elusive men—offer a more detailed look at a negative father complex and its transformation. Born in 1816, Charlotte was the third of six children: five daughters and one son. Her father, Patrick Brontë, the son of an Irish farm laborer, was a minister in rural Yorkshire. When Charlotte was five years old her mother died, and a stern aunt took over care of the children. Records portray Patrick Brontë as a tyrant who overlooked his talented daughters in favor of his ne'er-do-well son, Branwell.

Since his funds were meager, Patrick knew his daughters must be prepared to support themselves, so in 1824, the four eldest daughters—Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte, and Emily—were sent to the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge. Charlotte was only eight years old.

Cowan Bridge was a charity institution for the daughters of poor ministers. It was a place of suffering and abuse. The minister who founded the school believed that children would become sinners unless they were humbled, so the buildings were kept cold in winter, the girls were given only thin clothing, and they were fed stale or spoiled food. Charlotte's oldest sister Maria was repeatedly punished—sometimes whipped in front of the whole school. Maria became ill, but was afforded no special treatment. Charlotte recalled her sick sister being yanked from bed, thrown to the floor, and scolded for being dirty. Maria, weak and ill, slowly dressed herself. She was then punished for being tardy. After she had been at the school for a year and half, Maria was sent home, gravely ill with tuberculosis. Six months later, 11-year-old Maria died.

Barely a month later, a servant from Cowan Bridge arrived in a carriage at the Brontë home with ten-year-old Elizabeth. She was severely wasted from tuberculosis and died within weeks. Patrick Brontë then brought Charlotte and Emily home, probably saving their lives. Although this was clearly the right thing to do, we may also wonder why he didn't figure out what was going on a whole lot sooner. What must Charlotte (or Emily, author of *Wuthering Heights*) have made of their abuse at Cowan Bridge—and their father's complicity in it?

That Charlotte was profoundly affected by her experience there and recollected it with outrage for the rest of her life is obvious to any reader of *Jane Eyre*. She vividly describes her life at Cowan Bridge, thinly disguised in the novel as Lowood. When one of her editors congratulated Charlotte on her evocative portrayal of the miseries at Lowood, she replied with vehemence that her depiction was true, and that she had left out more egregious examples of abuse for fear that her readers would find them too improbable.

Patrick Brontë opposed the literary activities and aspirations of his daughters. He refused Charlotte funds to support her creative or career pursuits, wondering aloud what use women had for money. An aunt paid to publish a book of the sisters' poetry and to subsidize Charlotte's studies so that she might open her own school. All along, Patrick doted on his only son, Branwell, exhorting Charlotte to leave off writing in order to darn her brother's socks. Focused on his "brilliant and unhappy son," and making grandiose excuses for Branwell's excesses, Patrick barely saw the enormous talents of his daughters, even after Branwell died of alcohol and opium abuse (Green, 2010, p. 161).

> Charlotte's writing afforded her a creative relationship with her negative gather complex. Similarly, Jung's technique of active imagination allows our complexes to speak so that we can engage them in a creative confrontation.

As a young woman of 20, Charlotte confessed to her father her unhappiness over the prospect of teaching and confided her wish to be a writer. Patrick firmly discouraged such inclinations. In a letter written at age 21, Charlotte wrote:

> Following my father's advice—who from my childhood has counseled me … I have endeavoured not only attentively to observe all the duties a woman ought to fulfill, but to feel deeply interested in them. I don't always succeed, for sometimes when I'm teaching or sewing I would rather be reading or writing; but I try to deny myself; and my father's approbation amply rewarded me for the privation. (Gordon, 1995, p. 65)

Happily for us, Charlotte did not do a very good job of following her father's dictates, and the eventual result was *Jane Eyre*, published under a male pseudonym in 1847, when Charlotte was 31. The book was an immediate success, garnering critical praise and going through four editions. By early 1848, it was being read in Yorkshire, and Charlotte deemed that the time had come to tell her father of her literary efforts. She ventured into his study.

> "Papa, I've been writing a book."
> "Have you, my dear?" and he went on reading.
> "But, Papa, I want you to look at it."
> "I can't be troubled to read manuscript."
> "But it is printed."
> "I hope you have not been involving yourself in any such silly expense." (Gordon, 1995, p. 164)

Neither Emily nor Anne ever confessed to their father that they too were published authors, no doubt striving, like Charlotte, to be dutiful and obedient daughters. Like many a daughter with a father wound, Charlotte wished for her father's approval and love. She cared for him, often putting his needs ahead of her own. One of Charlotte's close friends observed in a letter to another friend, "I can never think without gloomy anger of Charlotte's sacrifices to the selfish old man" (Gordon, 1995, p. 295).

Charlotte's writing afforded her a creative relationship with her negative father complex. Similarly, Jung's technique of active imagination allows our complexes to speak

so that we can engage them in a creative confrontation. Writing fiction is a form of active imagination in which the author comes to live with and love the vibrant forms that present themselves on the page. The intense engagement with the inner life required to craft a work of fiction is a kind of alchemical *vas* wherein seemingly insoluble conflicts shift and transform. In this process, new personal narratives take shape, and new meaning is created. That Charlotte Brontë was able to transform her father complex is evidenced by her creative output in the form of four published books—two more than Anne, and three more than Emily.

Charlotte was also able to move toward a fuller life in the external world by marrying, something none of her siblings did. Her husband, Arthur Bell Nicholls, was Patrick Brontë's curate. He came to the parish when Charlotte was 30 years old and six years later worked up the courage to propose. Like a good daughter, Charlotte told him she would give him an answer after consulting with her father. Charlotte described her father's reaction to news of Nicholls's proposal in a letter:

> Agitation and anger disproportionate to the occasion ensued. If I had *loved* Mr. N and heard such epithets applied to him as were used, it would have transported me past my patience. As it was, my blood boiled with a sense of injustice. But Papa worked himself into a state not to be trifled with—the veins on his temples started up like whip-cord—and his eyes became suddenly blood-shot. (Green, 2010, p. 262)

Patrick Brontë felt that an ordinary curate was not good enough for his daughter.

Two years later, when Charlotte was 38, Mr. Nicholls renewed his proposal. At this point, Charlotte had survived the deaths of all of her siblings. Though she was a well-regarded novelist, her daily life consisted of caring for her sick, demanding father in his remote parsonage. She was lonely, and an impoverished future lay ahead, so when Nicholls once again sought her hand, she dared to plead her case with her father:

> "Father, I am not a young girl, nor a young woman, even—I never was pretty. I now am ugly. At your death I will have 300 pounds besides the little I have earned myself—do you think there are many men who would serve seven years for me?"
>
> "But could you bring yourself to marry a curate?" Mr. Brontë asked, scornfully. "Yes, I must marry a curate if I marry at all; not merely a curate but *your* curate; not merely *your* curate but he must live in the house with you, for I cannot leave you." [Charlotte could not leave her father because he had had a stroke, and required her care.]
>
> "Never. I will never have another man in this house." (Gordon, 1995, pp. 298–299)

Mr. Brontë stood up and left the room. He did not talk to Charlotte for a week. The family's long-time housekeeper asked Mr. Brontë if he wished to kill his daughter. Although he eventually consented to Charlotte's marriage, he did not attend the wedding, claiming he was unwell; a friend gave her away.

To marry, Charlotte had to confront both her outer, actual father and her inner father—the complex. I doubt that Charlotte could have had the necessary confrontation with her actual father if she had not worked with her father complex through her novels,

especially her most famous work, *Jane Eyre*. Neither did she marry a ghostly lover, but a kind and devoted man who appreciated Charlotte's intellect and talent. Their marriage was apparently a happy one, though Charlotte wrote no more novels and died less than two years later, a few weeks before her 39th birthday.

Jane Eyre has many parallels to Charlotte's own biography and to her individuation process. The story begins when Jane is a child, being raised by her cruel Aunt Reed after the death of her parents. When Aunt Reed tires of Jane, she sends the child to a charity school, Lowood, where Jane is subjected to terrible privation and humiliation. Her dearest friend Helen, like Charlotte's sisters, dies of illness and malnutrition. (So accurate was her description of the school that Yorkshire readers recognized it and the people on whom two main characters were modeled.)

Jane manages to complete her education and become a teacher at the school, but yearns for something more. She therefore seeks a position as a governess and is hired to educate Mr. Rochester's ward. Jane travels to Thornfield Hall, which, as its name implies, is an imposing, mysterious place not unlike the lion's castle deep in the forest. The staff is small, and Jane soon learns that Mr. Rochester visits only rarely. Thornfield's air of mystery and gloom is deepened by the strange laughter that Jane hears at night issuing from the attic.

One evening, Mr. Rochester arrives unexpectedly. He is a brooding, world-weary soul with brusque manners. He gives the impression that he is haunted, as though he were running from something. He tells Jane he is no longer able to benefit from the simple pleasure of human companionship, yet soon he begins to grow fond of her. While Jane initially finds Rochester somewhat beastly, both in manners and appearance, she also grows fond of him. Meanwhile, Jane continues to see and hear strange things at Thornfield. One night, the eerie laughter is followed by a terrifying conflagration in Rochester's bedroom, from which Jane saves him.

Nevertheless, Rochester behaves badly toward Jane. Among other things, he torments her by seeming to court a local beauty. In the end, Jane stands up to him and asserts her equality, whereupon he professes his love, asks her to marry him, and she consents. At the altar, however, a stranger arrives and announces to those gathered that Rochester is already married. It is revealed that, as a young man, Rochester was manipulated into marrying a beautiful but insane woman, now kept in the attic of Thornfield Hall.

A novel is partly a product of the unconscious, like a dream or a fairy tale. We can read the novel as an extended active imagination. … Writing the novel gave Charlotte an opportunity to stay in relationship with her complex so it could be transformed.

Jane resolves to leave Rochester at once. Stricken, he begs her to stay, suggesting they run away together to the south of France. But Jane leaves Thornfield immediately, though she has little money. She wanders as far as she can, and is eventually reduced to begging. Near death at last, she collapses on the doorstep of the Rivers' home, where she is taken in by two sisters, Diana and Mary, and their minister brother, St. John, who are all, she later learns, her cousins. Under the sisters' tender care, Jane recovers and begins teaching in the village school. When

St. John asks Jane to accompany him to India as his wife, she refuses because his practical proposal is essentially loveless and their union would not be authentic.

Shortly after this, Jane hears Rochester's voice calling her, a kind of supernatural phenomenon. She leaves immediately for Thornfield Hall, but finds it has burned to the ground. Rochester's wife was killed in the fire, and he was maimed and blinded when he tried to save her. Reunited at last, Jane and Rochester marry.

A novel is partly a product of the unconscious, like a dream or a fairy tale. We can read the novel as an extended active imagination, an internal drama that shows how various aspects of one psyche interact with one another. In this light, Rochester is an image of the wounded, bewitched masculine energy in the psyche of Charlotte Brontë. Mr. Rochester, as a product of Brontë's imagination, is an image of her own seductive ghostly lover. Writing the novel gave Charlotte an opportunity to stay in relationship with her complex so it could be transformed.

Like the lion in the fairy tale, Rochester is an alluring, wounded man who is, in effect, bewitched. Brontë likens him to a noble beast at various points: He is majestic, tragic, and seductive. Like the lion, he is also master of a kingdom, Thornfield Hall. Both the lion and Rochester hold the key to the riches of the unconscious, represented by the wealth of their isolated castles. Rochester, like the lion, is under a tragic spell cast by an evil "princess," his mad wife, and his own "sorcerer" father, who threw him into a marriage with a mentally ill woman for the sake of her fortune.

Like marriage to the lion, the danger to Jane is one of being seduced into a psychological half-life either by marrying Rochester illegitimately or by running away with him as his mistress. Had Jane consented to either option, she would have remained forever cut off from an authentic life, just as he is. Their union would have been based on a secret—and would have led to a life in darkness, like that in the lion's kingdom. As we saw in the fairy tale, the complex initially wants the ego under its sway in the unconscious.

Like the lion, Rochester resists the shining of any light upon himself and his relationship with Jane. He is careful to hide his sinister marriage. When Jane becomes curious about the strange noises emanating from the attic at night, he is evasive. After their engagement, he and Jane take part in a verbal sparring match in which he warns her not to want to know too much about him: "You are welcome to all my confidence that is worth having, Jane; but for God's sake, don't desire a useless burden! Don't long for poison. . . . Encroach, presume, and the game is up" (p. 230).

In the novel, the moment of daring to make the secret, magical relationship manifest occurs when Jane declares herself to Rochester. In this famous scene, Jane dares to claim more for herself than Rochester's elusive affections: "Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!—I have as much soul as you—and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you" (p. 222).

Like the lady longing to bring her lion husband to the wedding, Jane brings her own love for Rochester out of the shadows. And like the lion, something in Jane's ghostly lover also wishes to leave behind the darkness and risk being transformed by the light, for Rochester answers Jane's heartfelt confession with a proposal of marriage. However, as in the fairy tale, the psyche's first attempt to integrate the complex and bring it into the light results in estrangement. In the novel, the moment analogous to the light shining on the lion happens as Jane stands at the altar only to hear that Rochester is already married. The inner lover is not available to the ego, because he is in a secret, dark alliance with shadow.

Rochester's mad wife embodies many of the qualities associated with the feminine shadow that we saw imaged in the fairy tale as the princess/serpent. She is described as being "intemperate and unchaste." She drags Rochester through hideous and degrading agonies. She is violent, coarse, perverse, and depraved. The implication is that she is not only crazy and violent, but sexually impure as well. (Rochester says of her, "No professed harlot ever had a fouler vocabulary than she" [p. 271].) Again, violence, insanity, power, aggression, and sexuality are those qualities most likely to be thrust into the shadow for a woman, especially in Brontë's world, and especially for a woman with a father wound.

Once Rochester's marriage has been revealed, Jane can no longer stay with him. As in the fairy tale, the unconscious union represented by keeping the lion from light is followed by separation, differentiation, and discernment. Jane's efforts to unite herself with Rochester—to make their union conscious via marriage—have resulted in her being "kicked out" of the paradise of unconsciousness. Like the tale's heroine, Jane must undergo a long period of wandering alone, a time of despair on the individuation journey.

In the fairy tale the heroine reaches a point where she is beyond human help and must put her trust in transpersonal forces: the sun, moon, and winds. This happens to Jane when alone, penniless, and forsaken, she collapses on the Rivers' doorstep. Ego's resources exhausted, Jane puts her trust in God—and is taken in and rescued. She is nursed and nurtured by St. John's sisters, who offer her tender friendship and help heal her psychic and physical wounds. Here, for the first time, Jane finds a deep connection with the positive feminine.

St. John's bloodless proposal throws Jane into a confrontation with herself that forces her to clarify her own values. She is aware that her tendency to seek St. John's approbation will require a dreadful sacrifice—not unlike the sacrifice young Charlotte considered in giving up writing to gain her father's approval. Jane's inner dialogue is Brontë's eloquent articulation of the effects of a father wound: "By straining to satisfy St. John till my sinews ache, I will satisfy him. If I do make the sacrifice he urges, I will make it absolutely: I will throw all on the altar—heart, vitals, the entire victim. He will never love me; but he shall approve me" (p. 356).

This is an apt description of the emotional landscape of the negative father complex. I imagine this searing description of the subtle dynamics between Jane and St. John may actually reflect Brontë's own dynamic with her father. St. John is a clergyman, like Patrick Brontë. By refusing St. John, Jane once and for all turns her back on the stern, demanding, internal father; she has integrated enough of the dark feminine to do so. Though St. John calls her continued attachment to thoughts of Rochester "lawless and unconsecrated," Jane does not repudiate her love for Rochester.

Charlotte Brontë's novels allowed her to live *into* her complexes, to have an exchange with her wounded inner masculine, to find the inner nurturing feminine, and to claim her feminine shadow through some of her dark female characters.

Often in fairy tales, the demise or destruction of the "evil" character can be read symbolically as shadowy content having been assimilated by the ego. In a sense, it is as if that part of the personality is no longer split off, and so the image of it as an autonomous complex dies. Rochester's mad wife dies in the fire just after Jane has healed

(thanks to her loving female cousins), has remained faithful to her love for Rochester, and has repudiated St. John. Jane claims sexuality, power, independence, and even aggression toward the end of the novel. The split in her psyche healed, she returns to Rochester, and their union is finally consummated.

Charlotte Brontë's novels allowed her to live *into* her complexes, to have an exchange with her wounded inner masculine, to find the inner nurturing feminine, and to claim her feminine shadow through some of her dark female characters. Daring to write and publish *Jane Eyre* required the courage to confront her complex and tolerate her father's disapproval. It was a therapeutic process that culminated in her wedding—becoming united with both her inner self and with her curate husband. Connection with our own internal masculine, or negative father, also requires energy that we usually associate with the positive feminine: receptivity, relatedness, and most of all, love.

Redeeming my own negative father wound has been a life's work. How moving it has been for me to gaze over the past from my midlife perch, and see that my child psyche was already hard at work drinking in the nourishing stories that would one day help it to understand and heal.

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