

Rumpelstiltskin and the fungus power

Rumpelstiltskin A fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm

There was once a miller who was poor, but he had one beautiful daughter. It happened one day that he came to speak with the king, and, to give himself consequence, he told him that he had a daughter who could spin gold out of straw. The king said to the miller: "That is an art that pleases me well; if thy daughter is as clever as you say, bring her to my castle to-morrow, that I may put her to the proof."

When the girl was brought to him, he led her into a room that was quite full of straw, and gave her a wheel and spindle, and said: "Now set to work, and it by the early morning thou hast not spun this straw to gold thou shalt die." And he shut the door himself, and left her there alone. And so the poor miller's daughter was left there sitting, and could not think what to do for her life: she had no notion how to set to work to spin gold from straw, and her distress grew so great that she began to weep. Then all at once the door opened, and in came a little man, who said: "Good evening, miller's daughter; why are you crying?"

"Oh!" answered the girl, "I have got to spin gold out of straw, and I don't understand the business." Then the little man said: "What will you give me if I spin it for you?" - "My necklace," said the girl. The little man took the necklace, seated himself before the wheel, and whirr, whirr, whirr! three times round and the bobbin was full; then he took up another, and whirr, whirr, whirr! three times round, and that was full; and so he went on till the morning, when all the straw had been spun, and all the bobbins were full of gold.

At sunrise came the king, and when he saw the gold he was astonished and very much rejoiced, for he was very avaricious. He had the miller's daughter taken into another room filled with straw, much bigger than the last, and told her that as she valued her life she must spin it all in one night. The girl did not know what to do, so she began to cry, and then the door opened, and the little man appeared and said: "What will you give me if I spin all this straw into gold?"

"The ring from my finger," answered the girl. So the little man took the ring, and began again to send the wheel whirring round, and by the next morning all the straw was spun into glistening gold. The king was rejoiced beyond measure at the sight, but as he could never have enough of gold, he had the miller's daughter taken into a still larger room full of straw, and said: "This, too, must be spun in one night, and if you accomplish it you shall be my wife." For he thought: "Although she is but a miller's daughter, I am not likely to find any one richer in the whole world." As soon as the girl was left alone, the little man appeared for the third time and said: "What will you give me if I spin the straw for you this time?" - "I have nothing left to give," answered the girl. "Then you must promise me the first child you have after you are queen," said the little man. "But who knows whether that will happen?" thought the girl; but as she did not know what else to do in her necessity, she promised the little man what he desired, upon which he began to spin, until all the straw was gold. And when in the morning the king came and found all done according to his wish, he caused the wedding to be held at once, and the miller's pretty daughter became a queen.

In a year's time she brought a fine child into the world, and thought no more of the little man; but one day he came suddenly into her room, and said: "Now give me what you promised me." The queen was terrified greatly, and offered the little man all the riches of the kingdom if he would only leave the child; but the little man said: "No, I would rather have something living than all the treasures of the world." Then the queen began to lament and to weep, so that the little man had pity upon her. "I will give you three days," said he, "and if at the end of that time you cannot tell my name, you must give up the child to me."

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Then the queen spent the whole night in thinking over all the names that she had ever heard, and sent a messenger through the land to ask far and wide for all the names that could be found. And when the little man came next day, (beginning with Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar) she repeated all she knew, and went through the whole list, but after each the little man said: "That is not my name." The second day the queen sent to inquire of all the neighbours what the servants were called, and told the little man all the most unusual and singular names, saying: "Perhaps you are called Roast-ribs, or Sheepshanks, or Spindleshanks?" But he answered nothing but: "That is not my name."

The third day the messenger came back again, and said: "I have not been able to find one single new name; but as I passed through the woods I came to a high hill, and near it was a little house, and before the house burned a fire, and round the fire danced a comical little man, and he hopped on one leg and cried:

"Today do I bake,

tomorrow I brew,

The day after that the queen's child comes in;

And oh! I am glad that nobody knew

That the name I am called is Rumpelstiltskin!"

You cannot think how pleased the queen was to hear that name, and soon afterwards, when the little man walked in and said: "Now, Mrs. Queen, what is my name?" she said at first "Are you called Jack?" - "No," answered he. "Are you called Harry?" she asked again. "No," answered he. And then she said: "Then perhaps your name is Rumpelstiltskin?"

"The devil told you that! the devil told you that!" cried the little man, and in his anger he stamped with his right foot so hard that it went into the ground above his knee; then he seized his left foot with both his hands in such a fury that he split in two, and there was an end of him.

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Reflection and Interpretation of the Fairy Tale in Consideration of the Power of fungus

The unconscious (represented in the fairy tale as the power of fungus) enters our lives, and through it we human beings find our path. The unconscious guides us, but it can also overwhelm us and seeks to be understood and integrated. The unconscious participates in our lives much more extensively than we can imagine, precisely because it is not conscious to us and we can only vaguely surmise its workings.

Starting point: The miller's daughter is given a task that **no human being can accomplish**. She is supposed to transform the waste of human activity (straw) into something of value to humanity (gold = fulfillment of life). Such a process of carrying life forward toward a creative goal, however, requires a **cycle of creation** in which beings from many different realms (microbe, fungus, plant, animal) are active, and lies only partly within human responsibility.

But her father, the miller, seeks recognition in society and promises the king a superhuman ability. He argues as though the human being were master of creation. Society (with the king as its representative) clearly strives to dominate all processes of life and shape them for its own benefit. There seems to be a prevailing consciousness in society that humanity can exploit the world for its own use and does not need other realms of life. Compare this to our society today.

1. Challenge: The miller's daughter is asked to spin straw into gold and finds herself in a life situation that she cannot master without the **help of additional creative/life forces**.

From a homeopathic perspective, this points to a pathology characterized by the **feeling of incapacity or inferiority** in the face of the demands of the environment (often physically manifesting as **neurological disorders**), as well as despair over one's inability to cope. In such cases, the homeopathic remedy *Agaricus* could be of help.

With regard to socially imposed demands, it is often those considered less "useful" by society—people whose abilities are simpler or more limited in certain areas—who are most likely to find themselves in such a situation, in which they realize that they need the support of other creative forces. **They fail when confronted with demands that society expects of them.**

1. Help: The power of fungus appears in the form of the little man.

It helps, because it is precisely responsible for the process of **transforming waste or the seemingly unusable from the human realm** into something that can be further utilized within the earthly cycle of life (the fungus also works at night and in what is unconscious to us), ultimately creating something of value for both the cycle of creation and for humanity.

In order to be able to help, it requires **recognition** and **the delegation of the task to its sphere of responsibility**. In the fairy tale, this is symbolized by the gift of the **necklace**, which represents the acknowledgment of a completed cycle of creation. The miller's daughter is clearly **in a natural (unconscious) connection with the creative forces**, otherwise the power of fungus could not be summoned. In her despair and admission of her own incapacity (lack of responsibility), **the space for this is created**. She is not subject to the hubris of her father and of society (the king) regarding human responsibilities and abilities. She leaves room for the mushroom power in its natural domain.

This feels like luck—when everything takes its place in the earthly cycle of life and functions properly. **A solution exists!** Here, too, a homeopathic indication for *Agaricus* as a bringer of luck becomes evident. Suddenly the right order is restored. This also corresponds to the use of mushroom powers, particularly the fly agaric, **in shamanism**.

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2. Challenge: The king—representing the ruling social order/consciousness—feels confirmed in his **worldview/consciousness** by the successful completion of the task: **that humanity does not need the recognition of other beings of creation**, but is itself the sole master over world events and its existence. Trapped in this hubris, he demands more gold. The miller's daughter must spin yet more straw into gold.

We find ourselves in just such a situation today. Forces of domination, exploitation, and control oppose a development toward interconnectedness and equality (a turning point). The fostering of individuality and autonomy in postmodernity could bear fruit within a network of exchange. Such development would cause systems of domination to collapse. Against this, the old order resists.

2. Help: Again, the miller's daughter admits her incapacity (she weeps in the face of the overwhelming task) and receives help. As thanks, the little man is given a ring (a symbol of the earthly cycle). However, the connection to the cycle of creation has weakened: a ring does not possess the same dimension as a necklace.

3. Challenge and the Separation from the Cycle of Creation:

The king's hubris and misjudgment of human abilities grow to immeasurable proportions. He sees only himself and knows nothing of a higher order. He believes **himself to be lord over creation** and over himself. His own concerns stand at the center.

This excess of ego simultaneously creates **a free space for the power of fungus, for humanity no longer provides it** with anything. Humanity no longer takes its rightful place within creation. It no longer wishes to contribute to the earthly cycle, but instead claims the right to receive everything. It follows the logic of exploitation and subjugation. **It wants to gain value without effort. Others are to do the work. Consumption becomes the purpose of life. Production is carried out for consumption** as the purpose of life. (**Consumer society, exploitation**) This is the **Candida pathology**, or the miasma, of our time.

Since humanity no longer fulfills its task in the earthly cycle of life, it leaves more space to the fungus. **The fungus now directs its capacity toward the realm of human vitality itself.** It performs its work there. It penetrates into the innermost sphere of the human realm. Rumpelstiltskin demands the newborn child. Here its power is to act. Compare this to **Candida diseases** and to the role of sugar as a reward that has been obtained without any work being done.

Separation and Shock: Human beings settle into their arrogance and illusion (materialistic worldview, exploitation of nature and fellow human beings, lack of spiritual connection, etc.). **The miller's daughter becomes queen** (representative of the ruling order) and gives birth to a child. The little man appears and demands the child as belonging to his domain, in light of humanity's inability to fulfill its contribution. He has been granted a place within the human realm. Such was the agreement, based on the hubris/ego-centrism/exploitative society of human beings.

Process of Human Consciousness:

Yet the queen, once the miller's daughter, was never truly part of the excessive, false (materialistic) worldview. She possesses access to the creative forces, acknowledges them, and is granted the opportunity to prove this: namely, to make the proper creative relationships consciously manifest. **For this awakening, she must recognize the meaning of the power of fungus and grant it its rightful place in creation.** This now becomes a **conscious acknowledgment of the cycle of creation.** In her earlier encounter with the little man, it had been an implicit but unconscious acknowledgment.

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Recognition and awareness of fungus power and its significance in the cycle of creation: The little man sings about **his role as a representative of the (yeast) fungus (e.g., *Candida*) in the realm of creation**, where fox and hare bid each other goodnight—i.e., the opposites of the human realm/consciousness are suspended (Otherworld).

“Today I bake, tomorrow I brew.

The day after tomorrow, I fetch the queen’s child.”

The yeast fungus bakes and brews, yet the royal child does not fall under its responsibility. However, the child could potentially develop **oral thrush**, an oral ***Candida* infection**.

Change in Consciousness: The queen learns the name (gains awareness) through a messenger she sends **to the Otherworld (relating fungus power to shamanism), where fox and hare say goodnight to each other**. She now understands **the role of humans and the fungus** and can consciously allow the order of creation to prevail. This is experienced as a **fortunate occurrence**. (Compare *Agaricus*.)

Conclusion of the Fairy Tale: It succeeds in making the unconscious—namely, the role of humans and fungi in the cycle of creation—conscious. The action of a life force (here, the fungus power) is integrated into one’s own life. The life force is successfully incorporated into one’s personal expression. This represents **“true” healing** (Hahnemann: life force in balance). A development has taken place to eliminate a burden or illness.

What is the **collective dimension** of this “illness”? Must healing occur on a collective level? In the fairy tale, the **queen, the king, and the newborn prince** represent the collective. *Candida* infection represents a miasma of our time.

The fungus power’s misguided attempt to take on human responsibilities (caring for the prince and maintaining human societal order—***Candida* mycosis**) destroys itself when humans become **aware of their role**. It is not the fungus power itself, but its improper activity that self-destructs. Homeopathic ***Agaricus* may be important for people who feel intense anger when they perceive themselves as wronged**. This is an excessive anger whose source lies in the **feeling of failure (inability)**. Here, Rumpelstiltskin fails analogously to humans failing to take their naturally assigned role in the cycle of creation.

Things are not as they seem at first glance.

The **unconscious, the Otherworld, life forces, and archetypes** act powerfully and can be recognized.

They can be given their proper place.

The task of humans is to bring consciousness about life into creation.

The fairy tale illustrates the operation of life forces.

These forces are largely unconscious to us.

Their study fundamentally touches on homeopathy.

Through the fairy tale, or its interpretation, pathologies, indications, and

possibilities for healing through the homeopathic power of fungi become recognizable.

The Fairy Tale

From separation from creation (greed for gold),
through the formation of the self (the miller’s daughter becomes queen),
follows the conscious reintegration into the order of creation (recognition of the name).