

CREATIVITY, ARCHETYPES, AND SYMBOLS IN THE FAIRY TALES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract: Fairy tales, which are among the most significant signs of the collective unconscious, are entertaining and informative, and they transfer social values, fears, hopes, and universal life experiences from generation to generation. Such texts allow individuals to develop creative and symbolic narratives through imagination. In this study, 20 fairy tales were examined based on spatial structure and originality in terms of creativity and based on archetypes and symbols in terms of analytical psychology. In the content analysis conducted using MAXQDA 2024, it was determined that the participants used places with both everyday and fantastical dimensions in their fairy tales, elements of tales and mythological elements were reinterpreted in a modern and authentic manner, and archetypes and symbols were used effectively and creatively. This study demonstrated that fairy tales were an effective tool in the creative thinking, symbolic reading, and emotional-psychological awareness development processes of the participants in an educational sense.

Keywords: Fairy tale; Creative writing; Jung; Archetypes; Symbols.

INTRODUCTION

Fairy tales are among the clearest reflections of the collective unconscious in the depths of the human mind. Historically, people have transferred not only entertainment or knowledge but also social values, fears, hopes, and universal life experiences through fairy tales from generation to generation (Karabulut, 2016; Karabulut, 2022). According to Jung's theory of analytical psychology, the collective unconscious contains the images, symbols, and behavioral patterns that are commonly possessed by humanity independently of the personal experiences of individuals (Ege & Toksöz, 2021). In this sense, fairy tales are not only a product of individual cognitive processes but also a reflection of human history (Daşdemir, 2019; Tikdemir, 2025). The building blocks of this shared memory, called the collective unconscious, are archetypes. Archetypes represent the universal images and behavioral patterns held by humanity from birth and play an important role in the psychological development of individuals (Kılıçarslan, 2023; Musuloğlu & Sezgin, 2023; İnce, 2014). Jung discussed the unconscious in two categories: personal unconscious and collective unconscious. The personal unconscious consists of the events experienced by the individual throughout their life, what they have learned, and their forgotten memories. While this level contains the accumulation of feelings, thoughts, and behaviors unique to the individual, the collective unconscious is entirely universal and independent of individual experiences (Yılmaz, 2024). The collective unconscious is shaped by images, symbols, and emotions that are innate and commonly found in all members of humankind throughout history. In this context, besides being a cultural narrative tool, fairy tales may also be considered psychological constructs that reflect the universal motifs and archetypes of the human mind (Türkan, 2022).

Archetypes appear in a concrete way in the characteristics of the protagonists, symbols, and plots of fairy tales. The archetypes defined by Jung, such as anima-animus, rebirth, and the heroic journey, constitute a universal continuity of narrative by repeating in different cultures (Karaca, 2021). For example, while the heroic journey archetype represents risky journeys to the unknown and the intrinsic transformation experienced during this process, the rebirth archetype symbolizes reaching a more established and integrated identity by leaving one's old self behind. Therefore, fairy tales should not just be seen as individual stories, but they should be considered products that reflect the shared unconscious codes, universal psychological motifs, and cultural values of humanity.

The Jungian theory of dreams is also directly associated with the structure of fairy tales. According to Jung, dreams follow a certain dramatic structure, and this structure follows the steps of staging the problems experienced by the protagonist, revealing ways to resolve these problems, and symbolic transformation. In dreams, each scene represents the conflicts and pathways to solutions in the unconscious. Fairy tales also have a similar dramatic structure. Here, protagonists reflect the psychological processes of the individual and universal human experiences through the obstacles they face and the solutions they find. Therefore, dreams and fairy tales may be considered parallel narratives opening into the depths of the human mind, and both offer important tools for the resolution of the symbolic language of the unconscious (Karabulut, 2022). This symbolic language is observed in the reflection of archetypes on the narrative.

Fairy tales represent the inner journey of the individual through symbols such as forest, witch, magical treasure, enchanted objects, and journey. While the forest symbolizes inner realms that are unknown and await discovery, the witch or evil characters symbolize the psychological obstacles and repressed fears encountered

by the individual. The magical treasure represents the reward that will be accessed through the protagonist's personal development and achievement of integrity. In this context, fairy tales function as doors opening into the subconscious of the individual and offer the reader or listener the opportunity to explore their own inner world (Karabulut, 2022).

Franz (1996) regarded fairy tales as the purest reflections of the collective unconscious and therefore emphasized that, although cultures differ, universal symbols are found in fairy tales. Based on the archetype approach of Jung, Franz stated that fairy tales not only reflect individual psychological development but also reveal the shared experiences of humanity. These universal symbols, although they emerge in different geographies and cultural contexts, carry the common motifs of fundamental human psychology and establish a meaningful connection across cultures. Thus, they not only provide guidance in the inner development processes of individuals but also play a central role in the transmission of cultural memory across generations (Gülcan, 2019; Kavut, 2020).

The monomyth model developed by Campbell based on Jungian psychology, namely the hero's eternal journey, represents a universal narrative that recurs in myths and fairy tales across different cultures. Building on the emphasis of Franz on universal symbols, Campbell (2010) examined how these archetypal structures take on a concrete narrative form in fairy tales and developed the "hero's journey" model. The hero's journey is one of the most important narrative patterns that explains the timelessness of fairy tales and presents fundamental life experiences such as birth, struggle, transformation, and rebirth within a symbolic framework (Ege, 2021).

The content and structural characteristics of fairy tales make them suitable for archetypal analysis. The parallel established by Jung between dreams and fairy tales reveals that fairy tales also follow a dramatic schema: the story begins with an introduction, continues with the presentation of problems and the staging of conflicts, progresses through the phases of solutions and the obstacles faced by the characters, and concludes with transformation and completion. Following Campbell's model, this dramatic structure provides an important foundation for explaining both the psychological and narrative dimensions of fairy tales (Karabulut, 2022).

On the other hand, fairy tales reflect the fundamental emotions of the people of the period in which they were created, including fear, desire, hope, love, and hatred. Although these emotions are expressed in various forms in different cultural and historical contexts, they essentially carry the same psychological dynamics. This universality ensures that fairy tales retain value from past to present and appeal to the inner worlds of different generations (Karabulut, 2022). The function of fairy tales is not limited to individual psychology. Fairy tales also play a central role in cultural transfer. In education aimed at children, fairy tales tangibly convey social values and contribute to the development of problem-solving, listening, and critical thinking skills in preschool and primary school children (Epçaçan & Şık, 2022). Although fairy tale narration varies over time depending on the personalities of the narrators, their life experiences, and the relationships they establish with the audience, it still exists as dynamic cultural products that build a bridge between social context and individual processes thanks to its holistic structure (Bazancir, 2025).

Creativity is not limited to the process of generating new ideas. It also includes the ability to construct, concretize, and transform these ideas into narrative form. Narrative cognition activates the individual's abilities to establish cause-and-effect relationships, anticipate possible actions, and create new worlds, supporting creative functions. Fairy tales enhance both imagination and problem-solving skills, increasing the individual's capacity to innovate and adapt (Fletcher & Benveniste, 2022).

Torrance (1998) explained creativity through fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration and emphasized that creativity is a multidimensional phenomenon that is not limited to cognitive processes alone. Considered from the perspective of personality dimensions, creativity is evaluated as a multifaceted thought product, varying depending on knowledge base, intelligence, educational background, and experiences. Some studies have associated creativity with mental and cognitive processes such as problem-solving, analysis, synthesis, and innovative solution generation (Onur & Zorlu, 2017). Accordingly, fairy tales seem to be a functional narrative genre that supports both cognitive and emotional creativity of individuals.

The therapeutic function of fairy tales is also significant in the context of creativity. Fairy tale therapy is an effective method used to help individuals resolve psychological and emotional problems. Fairy tales facilitate the interpretation of subconscious emotions through symbols and archetypes, and the client, by identifying with the protagonists and events in fairy tales, finds the opportunity to develop new solutions to their problems (Daşdemir, 2019; Gümüş, 2021). Therefore, fairy tales function not only as reflections of the collective unconscious and cultural values but also as powerful narrative tools that reveal the creative potential of the individual (Alsaç, 2021; Eracar, 2013). While activating imagination, fairy tales support cognitive, emotional, and social development through symbolic expression and dramatic structure, and by activating different dimensions of creative thinking, they provide a transformative effect both personally and culturally (Bulut, 2024; Akçakaya, 2023; Demir, 2022; Ülter, 2023).

Hence, the relationship of fairy tales with the collective unconscious, the repetition of universal archetypes, and their functions that activate creative potential demonstrate that they are not merely tools of cultural transmission, but they are also multidimensional constructs that support individual and social development.

However, it is noteworthy that studies in the literature addressing the relationships between fairy tales, creative thinking, analytical psychology, and individual narratives within a holistic framework are limited. In particular, how the Jungian archetype theory and the components of creative writing are reflected in fairy tale-based narratives of university students has not been sufficiently researched. This situation necessitates revealing how fairy tales function in the context of the collective unconscious and creativity through individual narratives. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap in the literature and shed light on the role of fairy tales in individual narrative production by examining the narratives of university students within the framework of analytical psychology and creativity theory. The main problem of this study is to determine to what extent and how the components of creative writing and the fundamental concepts of analytical psychology, namely archetypes and symbols, are reflected in the written narratives of university students. In line with this main problem, the study is presented in two dimensions:

1. To what extent and how are the components of creative writing included in the written narratives of university students?
2. To what extent are the fundamental concepts of analytical psychology, namely archetypes and symbols, observed in the written narratives of university students, and how are these components expressed?

In this study, data regarding how the components of creative writing and the fundamental concepts of analytical psychology are reflected in the written narratives of university students were analyzed using the content analysis method. First, themes regarding the extent to which components of creative writing such as originality and imagistic expression were included in the narratives of students were addressed. Then, the forms in which archetypes and symbols appeared in the narratives and how they were expressed were systematically examined.

METHOD

Design

This study was designed with a qualitative research approach and is based on document analysis. Document analysis enables the systematic examination of data related to research problems through written materials (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The written narratives of the participants were used as the main data source, and the obtained data were analyzed using the content analysis method. Content analysis is an approach that makes it possible to reveal recurring patterns, themes, and categories in the data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 20 undergraduate students studying at a public university in western Türkiye. The participants were selected on a voluntary basis and participated in a fairy tale-based writing activity. The written texts collected from the participants constituted the main documents of the study.

Data Collection

The data were collected through a fairy tale-based writing activity prepared within the scope of the study. The participants were asked to write their own fairy tales in accordance with the specified instructions. These written narratives were used to examine how the participants reflected both the components of creative writing and the concepts specific to analytical psychology.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the MAXQDA 2024 qualitative data analysis software. First, the texts were carefully read by the researchers, divided into semantic units, and the coding process was carried out. Categories were formed based on the relationships among the codes, and ultimately, themes were determined. During the coding process, both the components of creative writing (e.g., originality, imagistic expression, spatial structure) and the fundamental concepts of analytical psychology (archetypes and symbols) were taken into account.

Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of the study were ensured by considering the credibility, transferability, consistency, and confirmability criteria, which are trustworthiness measures in qualitative research. To increase credibility, the coding process was conducted by two independent researchers, the resulting themes were submitted for expert opinions, and necessary revisions were made. Moreover, direct quotations from participant narratives were provided to ensure that the interpretations were data-based. For transferability, the context of the study, the sample, the data collection process, and the analysis stages were explained in detail, and comprehensive descriptions that could guide studies to be conducted in similar settings were offered. To ensure consistency, inter-rater agreement was analyzed during the coding process, the code-theme relationships were transparently reported using the MAXQDA software, and the analysis steps were documented in detail. The inter-coder agreement rate was calculated to support the reliability of the analyses. To strengthen confirmability, the entire analysis process was recorded in detail to ensure that the obtained results were

The main indicators of originality in fairy tales are the inversion of known patterns or the creation of new narrative elements. For example, in the fairy tale of Participant 3, the witch character, which traditionally possesses negative traits in fairy tales, was reversed and described as a helpful and nature-bound individual. In this narrative, the expression “the villagers behaving prejudicially toward the witch” also revealed the social critique aspect of the fairy tale.

Similarly, in the fairy tale of Participant 9, the division of time, light, and darkness into four different realms created an original fictional universe and transcended the classical narrative of time. Here, the abstract concept of time was concretized: “Tiktik measuring time” highlighted both a novel character and a graspable element of time.

Imagistic expression and descriptions strengthen the impact of the narrative by creating visual, sensory, and emotional associations in the mind of the reader. In the fairy tale of Participant 8, abstract concepts were concretized to form a poetic language: “walls made of dreams, streets made of silence” enabled the transformation of imagination into a physical place. Likewise, the image “dreams giving birth to stars” added originality to the narrative.

In the fairy tale of Participant 6, expressions such as “the moon was wandering in the sky, laying a silver path over the spring” established a connection between visual imagery and poetic qualities. Natural motifs were used as metaphors that reflected human emotions.

A strong connection was established between nature and the inner world in the fairy tales. In the fairy tale of Participant 12, “the removal of thorns” was identified with themes of loss and sacrifice. The constant return to the beginning while progressing along the path represented inner struggle and a cyclical understanding of time.

In the fairy tale of Participant 15, colors functioned not only as visual elements but also as emotional and social symbols: “Red invigorates the kingdom with passion and energy, exciting everyone.” In this narrative, the merging of colors to create new powers conveyed a message of peace and coexistence through imagery. Similarly, in the fairy tale of Participant 16, the protagonist gaining strength by sharing the light of the flower reflected the symbolic representation of selflessness and unity. The expression “the petals of the flower sparkled as if adorned with star dust” could be given as an example of the concretization of abstract values.

Archetypes and Symbols

Archetypes

The concept of archetype was introduced into the psychology literature by Jung as a significant term related to the unconscious. It refers to the universal patterns belonging to the collective unconscious that are commonly observed across all human communities. According to Jung (2009), the concept of archetype was used in antiquity in a manner similar to Plato’s notion of “idea.” According to Franz (1997, p. 17), on the other hand, an archetype can be defined as the natural stasis of the human psyche.

The archetypes most distinctly identified in the fairy tales of the participants of this study were as follows:

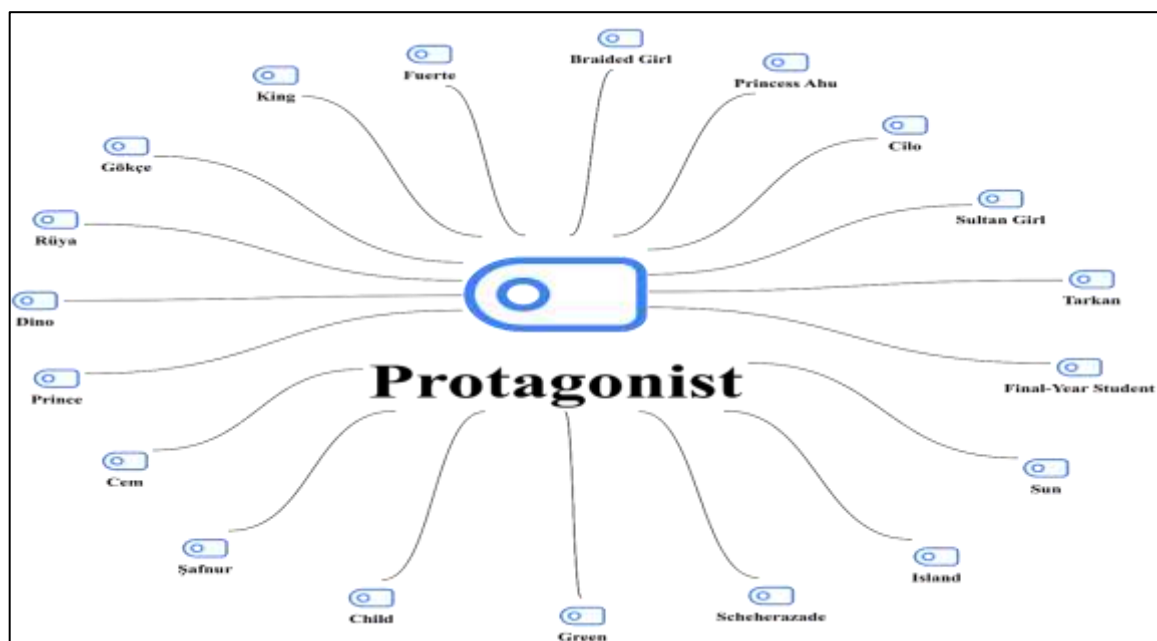


FIGURE 2 Archetype: Protagonist

In the fairy tales written by the participants, the “protagonist” archetype was represented across a rather broad spectrum. According to the coding results, the protagonists included characters such as King, Fuerte, Braided Girl, Princess Ahu, Cilo, Sultan Girl, Tarkan, Final-Year Students, Sun, Island, Scheherazade, Green, Child,

Şafnur, Cem, Prince, Dino, Rüya, and Gökçe. This diversity showed that the participants did not confine the protagonist archetype in their fairy tales to classical figures alone, but they also portrayed it with original and different characters.

All protagonists in the fairy tales of the participants had completed the cycle of the hero's journey. While figures such as prince, princess, and king were the most commonly recognized indicators of heroism in the fairy tales, characters such as Dino, Rüya, Island, Scheherazade, and Green stood out as more original and fantastical protagonists. This indicated that the participants were both nourished by the literary tradition and activated their individual creativity.

The protagonist archetype in the fairy tales had mostly completed the stages of inner transformation, struggle, and undergoing trials. For example, Gökçe emerged as a modern female protagonist who discovered her leadership, whereas Scheherazade defined her heroism through sacrifice by renouncing her immortality for love. "Final-Year Students" represented the concept of collective heroism and offered an example of collective struggle.

From the perspective of Jungian analytical psychology, it was seen that the protagonist archetype had an important role in the process of individuation. Protagonists confront threats arising from the unconscious (e.g., shadow, witch, dragon) and through this struggle, they both transform themselves and bring a new order to their communities.

The protagonist archetype in the fairy tales of the participants was portrayed in a rich, multilayered, and functionally diverse manner. The presence of both traditional and original heroism traits revealed that the participants both reproduced cultural heritage and developed novel heroism narratives through their own imagination.

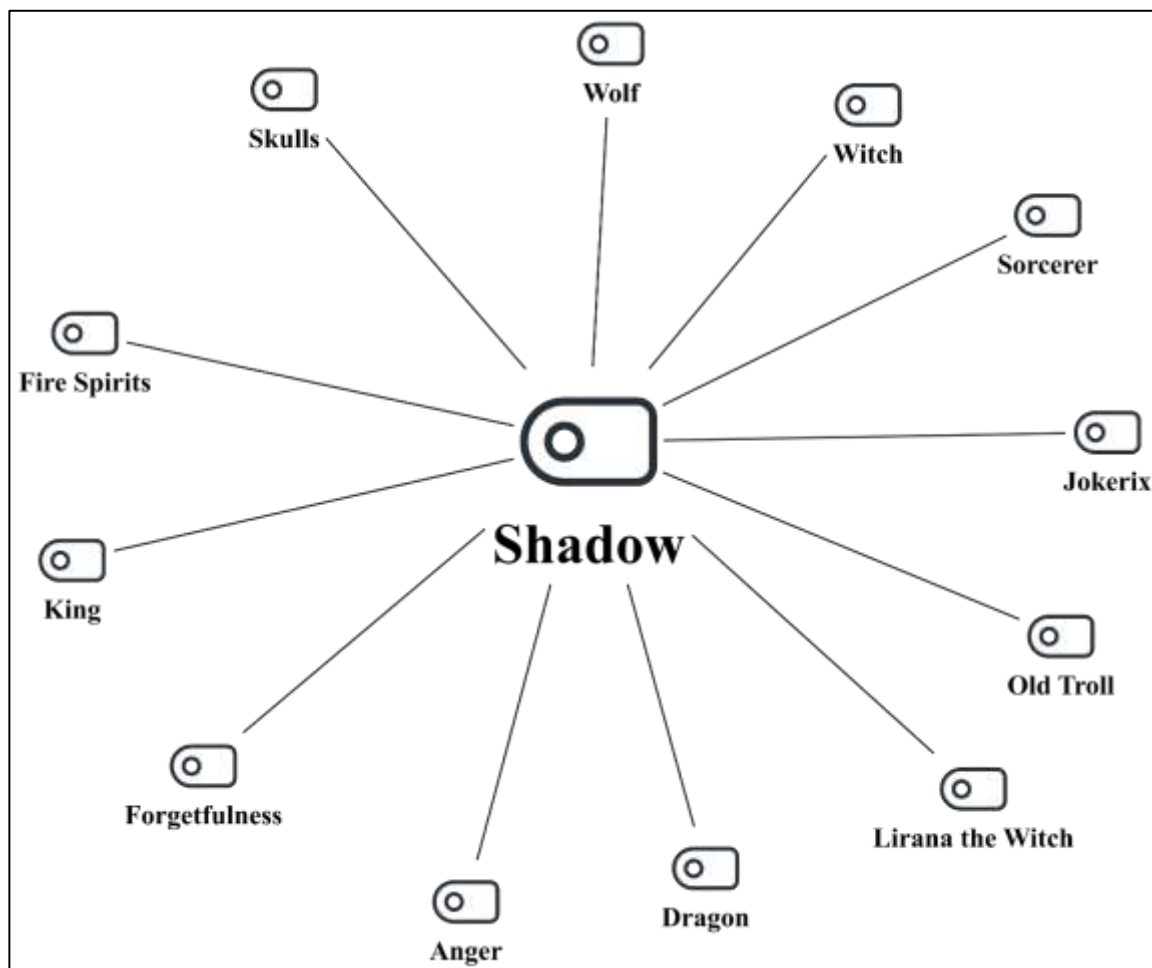


FIGURE 3 Archetype: Shadow

In the fairy tales of the participants, the shadow archetype was represented with considerable variety. Among the shadow characters that emerged from the coding were wolf, witch, sorcerer, Jokerix, old troll, Lirana the Witch, dragon, anger, forgetfulness, fire spirits, skulls, and king. This diversity showed that the participants conceptualized the shadow not merely as an individual enemy or evil character but also as a symbol of abstract concepts, inner fears, and dark emotions.

In known fairy tale and mythic traditions, the shadow archetype is typically embodied by witches, sorcerers, dragons, or monsters that pose direct threats. This tendency continued in the fairy tales of the participants. For example, witch and sorcerer figures were positioned as conscious embodiments of evil, functioning as obstacles to the protagonist, whereas dragon and troll figures symbolized fear, destruction, and the challenging nature of trials.

However, in some fairy tales, the shadow archetype appeared in abstract form. Concepts such as “forgetfulness” or “anger” were involved as shadow figures representing emotional or cognitive processes. This indicated that the shadow was not only an external adversary but also an element requiring confrontation within the individual’s own suppressed emotions.

A particularly noteworthy element was the king’s role as a shadow figure. This highlighted that authority and power may possess not only protective but also oppressive and threatening aspects. Thus, the participants reinterpreted authority in their fairy tales through a critical lens.

Overall, the shadow archetype in the fairy tales of the participants was portrayed in a rich, symbolic, and multilayered fashion. The shadow functioned as both an external threat (dragon, witch, sorcerer) and an internal fear or emotion (anger, forgetfulness), serving as a trial that the protagonist must face on the path to individuation. This diversity suggested that the participants did not limit the shadow to the level of “evil character” but employed it as a metaphor for confronting the inner world.

In the fairy tales written by the participants, the sage archetype was represented through various figures. Among the sage characters that emerged from the coding process were Old Woman, Kadim (Ancient), Great Oak, Birds, and Three-Headed Owl. These characters assumed the role of guidance, transmission of knowledge, and directing the journey of the protagonist in the fairy tales.

The “old woman,” appearing as a sage archetype, drew attention with her functions of wisdom, experience, and protective guidance. In Jungian analytical psychology, the “wise old woman” archetype is considered a guiding figure in the protagonist’s contact with the unconscious. Similarly, the character “Kadim” represented ancient wisdom and the memory of the past, functioning as a bridge between consciousness and the unconscious for the protagonist.

Figures of nature and animals demonstrated that the type of wisdom was reflected in more symbolic forms in the fairy tales. For example, “Great Oak” symbolized rootedness, continuity, and the reservoir of collective wisdom, and “birds” represented the transfer of wisdom, intuition, and celestial perspective. “Three-Headed Owl” stood out as a symbol of wisdom, trial, and multifaceted perspective. The owl being depicted with three heads deepened its function of seeing truth from different directions and presenting trials to the protagonist.

In general, it was seen that the sage archetype in the fairy tales of the participants was constructed through both human and nature/mythological beings. This showed that the fairy tales portrayed the figure of wisdom not only through an elderly character but also through elements of nature and symbolic animals. Thus, the sage gains both a guiding and transformative function in the journey of the protagonist.

The sage archetype was used in a rather rich and functional manner in the fairy tales of the participants. This archetype strengthened the core dynamic of the fairy tales as a guide who offered direction in the trials faced by the protagonist, provided solutions, and supported the process of individuation.

In the 20 fairy tales written by the participants, the “Helper/Guide” archetype was represented in quite diverse forms. Among the figures that emerged from the coding process were father, king, animals, fox, wolf, lion, giant, Miro the Rabbit, water fairies, Enka, and Zeyp. This diversity showed that the participants depicted both human and supernatural elements as guiding figures.

The frequent use of animals (e.g., fox, wolf, lion, rabbit, eagle) in the role of guide is also rooted in the identification of animals with symbols of intuition, instinct, and wisdom in the collective unconscious. It is worth stating that animal figures mostly assume the function of guiding the protagonist, helping them find the right path, or supporting them in overcoming difficulties. This revives the guiding archetypal role of animals in the tradition of fairy tales and myths.

In the context of human figures, the father and king figures assumed the function of guidance in the fairy tales as representatives of authority and protection. From the perspective of Jungian analytical psychology, the father figure reflects both patriarchal wisdom and a reassuring authority. The king functions not only as a symbol of power but also as a guide and a balancing figure.

Among the fantastical elements, characters such as water fairies, Enka, and Zeyp were archetypes that supported the inner journey of the protagonist and provided magical knowledge or extraordinary power. These characters contributed to the transformation process of the protagonist by building a bridge between the unconscious and consciousness. Indeed, such figures frequently seen in fairy tales assume the “helper” function encountered in the individuation journey of the protagonist.

One may state that the helper/guide archetype was portrayed in a rather rich, multifaceted, and symbolic manner in the fairy tales of the participants. The participants did not reduce the guide archetype to a single character type. On the contrary, they addressed it across a wide spectrum from animals to supernatural beings, from human figures to fantastical characters. This showed that they were inspired by the fairy tale tradition and made original creative choices.

In the fairy tales of the participants, the persona archetype was represented with considerable diversity. In the coding results, various persona types such as fairy, innocent fairy, innocent girl, princess, king, student, warrior, guide, and witch were identified. Considering this diversity, the participants expressed the social, cultural, and symbolic roles of the protagonists in their fairy tales through different masks.

The emergence of the persona archetype in the fairy tales reflected the face that the characters showed to the external world and the process of adapting to social expectations. For example, the princess and king personas represented traditional concepts of authority, nobility, and order, whereas the fairy and innocent fairy personas offered the face of purity, goodness, and a life in harmony with nature. The student and warrior personas were closer to the modern protagonist type and symbolized both the process of learning and struggle and resilience.

A particularly noteworthy point was the inclusion of the witch persona. The witch represents the dark aspects of the unconscious, social exclusion, and the faces associated with the shadow. This shows that the participants depicted not only positive masks in their fairy tales but also frightening, alienating, or threatening roles. Looking at the overall picture, the participants portrayed the persona archetype in a rather creative and multidimensional manner. The different persona types used in the fairy tales were compatible with the social roles of individuals, reflections in the unconscious, and cultural patterns. In Jungian analytical psychology, persona is defined as the mask that the individual presents to the external world. The diversity of persona observed in the fairy tales of the participants revealed that they expressed social roles, the search for identity, and the process of individuation through symbolic elements of fairy tales.

In the fairy tales written by the participants, the anima and animus archetypes were represented through different characters. According to the coding results, characters representing the anima archetype included Hatun, Nina, Scheherazade, Island, Sun, Witch, Lethiya, Sultan Girl, and Mira, while characters representing the animus archetype included Prince, Dino, Şafnur, Yusuf, Young Man, Giant, and Zeyp.

According to Jungian analytical psychology, anima represents the feminine image in the unconscious of the man, and animus represents the masculine image in the unconscious of the woman. In the fairy tales of the participants, the reflections of these archetypes were shaped not only through gender differences but also through psychological functions and role distributions.

Anima mostly consists of characters that provide guidance, transformative power, and represent emotional intensity. For example, Scheherazade's sacrifice, Island's bond with nature, or Lethiya's wisdom reflected the anima's qualities of compassion, inspiration, and transformation. Characters such as Witch and Mira revealed not only the positive but also the threatening, shadow-like face of the anima.

Animus is associated rather with struggle, strength, courage, and external trials. The characters Prince and Young Man played protective or guiding roles in the protagonist's journey. On the other hand, characters such as Dino and Giant sometimes stood beside the protagonist and sometimes represented the challenging face of trials, assuming the function of animus. From this perspective, animus underscored the aspects of heroism, resilience, and rational problem-solving in the fairy tales of the participants.

The anima and animus archetypes were portrayed in a multifaceted manner, possessing both facilitating and challenging functions.

Symbols

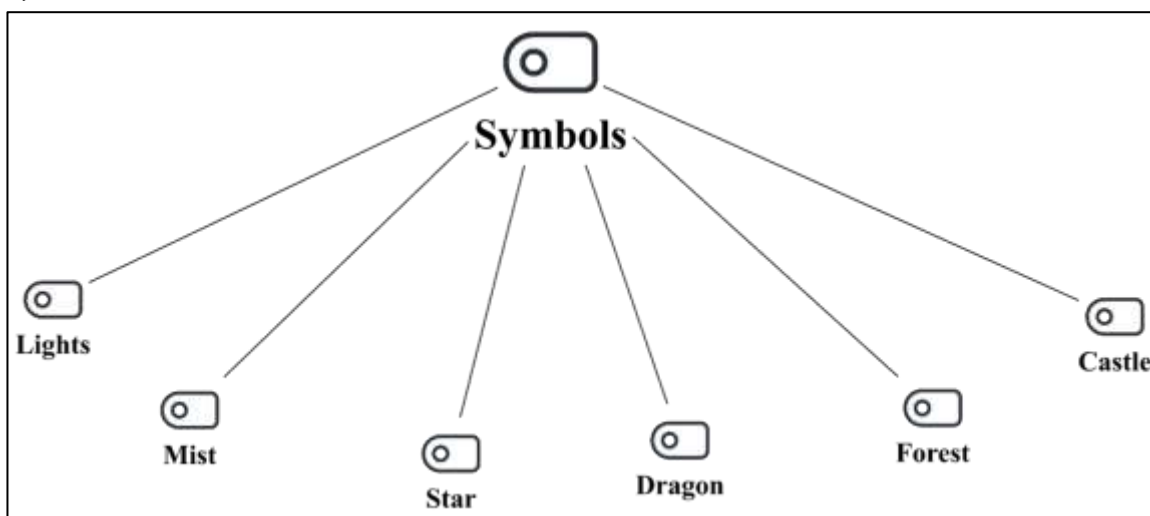


FIGURE 4 Common Symbols in the Fairy Tales

Symbols are the expression form of invisible archetypes. Archetypal knowledge is revealed through symbols and carries the hidden forces of the psyche. Like archetypes, they are alive and play a healing role in the

process of individuation (Jung, 2006). Claiming that a symbol has a single and fixed meaning is often misleading (Jung, 2019). To interpret the symbols in fairy tales, one must focus holistically on the narrative. Therefore, in interpreting the symbols, the meaning they acquired within the fairy tales was taken as the basis.

In the fairy tales, Participant 1 used ruby phoenix, brooch, and star; Participant 2 used blue talisman, castle, forest, and staff; Participant 3 used fruit trees, wooden house, giant, and village; Participant 4 used giantleaf, tribulus, three-headed owl, forest, and giant; Participant 5 used forest, blue moss, flower garden, castle, dragon, and key; Participant 6 used silver spring, moonlight, and great oak; Participant 7 used mist, lake, mirror, garden, and seed; Participant 8 used cane, mist, seed, and light; Participant 9 used heart, wing, light, and storm; Participant 10 used silver lake drop, dragon, compass, lantern, bracelet, and star; Participant 11 used apple, skull, flame, and rose; Participant 12 used thorn, snake, flower, and hut; Participant 13 used golden key, sun, moon, star, book, lake, and frog; Participant 14 used sun, pitch-black cloud, insect, moon, light, and summit; Participant 15 used red, orange, yellow, green, blue, navy blue, and purple; Participant 16 used sky flower, eagle, lion, rusty sword, mist, and shadow; Participant 17 used poison ivy, wolf, giant, mountain, cookie, and witch; Participant 18 used fox, Mount Züm, cave, light, and magic; Participant 19 used flute, witch, animal, and house, and Participant 20 used magical pot, palace, garden, and water symbols. Among the symbols most frequently used in the fairy tales written by the participants, light (f4), mist (f3), forest (f3), star (f2), dragon (f2), and castle (f2) stood out. These symbols reflected both the rooted elements of the fairy tale tradition and the archetypal themes corresponding to the collective unconscious in Jungian analytical psychology.

Light (f4) was the most frequently used symbol and was generally associated with hope, rebirth, inner enlightenment, and individual transformation. The participants portrayed light as a guiding element in the protagonist's discovery of their path or inner strength. This usage suggested that light overlapped with the symbol of "reaching truth" and "spiritual enlightenment" in the unconscious.

Mist (f3) appeared in the fairy tales as a metaphor for uncertainty and the secrets hidden in the unconscious. Forest (f3) symbolized darkness, the unknown, and danger. The forest was positioned both as a place of danger and as the area where the protagonist underwent trials. In the Jungian approach, the forest represents the collective unconscious itself. The frequent use of the forest by the participants pointed to the protagonist's inner journey and confrontation with the shadow.

The symbol of star (f2) in the narratives represented hope, guidance, and the light of collective consciousness. Dragon (f2) emerged as a symbol of shadow, fear, and primal threats. In the fairy tales of the participants, the dragon was seen not only as an external obstacle encountered by the protagonist but also as a metaphor for confronting inner fears.

Castle (f2), on the other hand, functioned in the narratives as a symbol of wisdom, authority, and the center of the shadow. The participants depicted the castle as both a protected and a dangerous area, showing the dual nature of this symbol.

In general, the symbols most frequently used by the participants reflected the oppositions of light-darkness, hope-uncertainty, and order-chaos that determined the protagonist's journey in the fairy tale narratives. This demonstrated that the participants, consciously or unconsciously, turned toward the most fundamental symbols of the collective unconscious.

CONCLUSION

In this study, 20 fairy tales written by university students were analyzed in terms of spatial structure, originality, and in the context of archetypes and symbols within the framework of Jung's theory of analytical psychology. The coding process conducted using MAXQDA revealed that the participants did not remain bound to traditional fairy tale patterns alone, but they also constructed creative, multilayered, and symbolic narratives.

The places in the narratives formed a narrative universe in which realistic and fantastical elements were intertwined. Places related to nature such as forest, cave, and mountain functioned as archetypal domains of the collective unconscious and prepared the ground for the transformation of the protagonist. Fantastical places such as "Forest of Mirrors" and "Invisible City" also indicated that the participants could use literary imagination creatively. It is understood that places were used not only as settings where the plot unfolded but also as symbolic, thematic, and atmosphere-building elements.

In the examined fairy tales, originality was achieved through the inversion of traditional patterns, the creation of new fictional universes, the concretization of abstract concepts, and the enrichment of semantic layers through imagery.

In terms of archetypes, the participants were able to construct deep narratives with unconscious dynamics. The protagonist archetype was represented not only with traditional traits but also with original characteristics and was associated with themes such as individual development, inner transformation, and collective struggle. The shadow archetype was depicted not only through external enemies but also through inner fears, repressed emotions, and abstract threats. The sage and helper archetypes were represented not only through human figures but also through elements of nature and animals, drawing on the symbolic elements of the

collective unconscious. The different representations of the persona and anima/animus archetypes offered rich possibilities for analysis in terms of social roles, psychological processes, and the journey of individuation.

In conclusion, the fairy tales written by the participants can be evaluated not only as a creative writing activity but also as literary and psychological texts in which individual and collective unconscious elements, cultural patterns, and creative imagination converge. In this context, the results of this study demonstrate the importance of creative writing activities as a tool that supports both individual development and cultural analysis. It is also seen that archetypal constructs can be reproduced and transformed through individual narratives.

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