

A child sees the world in terms of bad and good, wrong and right. When she grows up she can see the nuances of morality and ethics and sometimes must argue over the distinction between bad and good. This transition can be a difficult and long road but it can lead to a strength and courage that would be impossible to find without the experience of growing up.

In the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg it is revealed that the stories of the word are representative and hold an inner meaning. Using Swedenborg's science of correspondences I have found one possible inner meaning for another ancient text; the story of Jorinde and Joringel, a German folk story which was first recorded in writing by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm.

Seeing as this German fairytale is less well known, here is a brief summary:

A betrothed couple go for a walk in the woods near the castle of a witch who is notorious for turning young maidens into birds. When they wander too near her castle, she attacks, making the young man, Joringel unable to move and turning the young maid, Jorinde into a bird and hides the bird in her castle.

Joringel despairs and wanders into a strange village where he becomes a shepherd. He then has a dream which shows him a red flower with a pearl at its center that has the power to undo any enchantment. When he wakes he searches everywhere until he finds the flower and carries it to the witch's castle. He uses the flower to open the door, finds the room which holds all the birds that were once maidens, disenchant the witch and all the birds. He and his Jorinde are reunited and live happily together for many years.

The full story can be found at this website **and I highly recommend that you check it out:** <http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/authors/grimms/69jorinde.html>

After first reading this story, it caught my attention as having potential spiritual meaning because of all the details that don't seem important to the plot. There doesn't seem to be much of a literal lesson (other than don't mess with witches in dark woods) so it stuck out to me as a story that probably meant something more.

The witch represents the perversion and falsifying of law and order through deception (AC 7296). Her choice disguise is an owl which represents reasoning based on falsity (AE 650). The young maidens targeted by the witch correspond to an affection for truth (AR 620) and the birds which the witch transforms them into correspond to affection for the natural (AR 684). In other words, the witch corresponds to those who take the truth and twists it with false reasoning because all they care about are things like reputation and worldly wealth.

In the story it details what happens to people who come within 100 steps of her castle. Any person who gets that close will freeze where they stand and be unable to move at all, and any maiden will be turned into a bird. 100 corresponds to the general state of an individual (AC 1332). An inability to move corresponds to being spiritually and naturally powerless (AC 5328). So if anyone should falter in their doctrine and come to close to what is false, they will find that they have lost all natural and spiritual power. The power of falsity has changed all affection for truth into false reasoning and hidden it away in external truths.

Now for the correspondences of our title characters. I started my research for this story by going to the internet to see what kind of interpretations other people had of this story. Some ideas I found suggested that the similarity in their names, Jorinde and

Joringel, implies that they are two parts of one person. I liked this idea and discovered, as I did more research into the spiritual correspondences of the story, that it fits quite well.

Jorinde (a young woman) represents affection for truth while a Joringel (a young man) represents truth (AR 620). The significance of their betrothal is that they are in the state of preparation before the marriage of good and truth within us. Together, Jorinde and Joringel represent one human being. They are the motivation and understanding that govern all our actions. As we work on ourselves and go through the process of regeneration we are working to create an inner marriage of good and truth. But we can be on the very edge of completing this process but then we wander into the wood.

To wander represents having feelings of indecision or uncertainty in doctrine (AC 2679). A thick wood or forest corresponds to dim perception while a castle corresponds to rational and natural truths (AC 3271). Entering the woods symbolizes the time of life when you feel sure in your understanding of the world. You have confidence in yourself and think you can do anything. When Jorinde and Joringel have wandered a while, Joringel warns that they should not get too close to the witch's castle. We know that there is falsity out there and yet we have confidence that we could never fall into it.

The sun is setting on the woods which symbolizes a loss of charity as well as a person coming into the use of their own judgement (AE 187). Every person must come into their judgement and leave behind our childhood. Yet it can be a dangerous time when we start to stray too far from the doctrine we learned as children, creating just enough room for falsity to creep in.

It is interesting to note that before the witch arrives, Jorinde begins to cry. She sits in the sunlight with Joringel and they both weep and are afraid. They see how far they

have wandered and how close they are to the witch's castle. This is notable because it seems as though the two just sit down and give up as if waiting for the witch to come. But of course there is more to it than that. Sitting down corresponds to a time of thought and weeping is a sign of deep grief (AC 2684). During that frightening time of life between childhood and adulthood, we can feel a lot of confusion, fear and grief. We can see that we are dangerously close to falsity but it is so well disguised that we have no way of perceiving it. I love the image of the couple sitting together in the sunlight because it reminds us that it is alright to feel lost and alone, the Lord's love is still all around us and sometimes all we can do is sit, think and weep.

Jorinde begins to sing sadly that the turtle-dove will soon be dead. A turtle-dove signifies the "good of innocence" (AC 3394). This seems to symbolize a certain amount of self-awareness in us as we see ourselves change from child to adult. There is a grief and sadness there as we move from a child's understanding to that of an adult along with a fear that we will falter in our doctrine and faith.

When the sun has set and it is night, this represents a complete state of falsity. The witch in the form of an owl changes Jorinde into a bird. This represents how perversion of the truth has the power to use false reasoning to convince us that our affection for truth is unfounded and unreasonable. If our understanding of the truth wasn't tenuous enough, the introduction of falsity makes us lose all affection for the "truth" as we now understand it. In reality the truth that we have loved and wish to possess still exists represented by Joringel but he is immobile and we become spiritually paralyzed. Truth without affection for truth loses all motivation and there is no way for that truth to be of use.

Now the witch takes her true form. **She is old and her skin is yellow which is an external sign of falsities and an unclean nature (AC 3341). Her eyes are red which symbolize an understanding colored by an evil love of self (AC 5304, 3300). Her nose is crooked which represents a cunning and deceitful life (AE 581)(AC 3103).** The witch then carries Jorinde away to her castle and hides her in an inner room. This is the falsities hiding any affection we may have had for the truth away behind false doctrine and teachings.

When the witch returns to Joringel, she releases him from her spell. He begs and pleads with the witch to return his Jorinde but she refuses. Without an affection for truth or a sense of good our state of preparation for regeneration dissipates and any progress we have made is lost. Without any affection for the truth and no sense of faith or doctrine left, Joringel is left to wander the world alone.

Strange or stranger represents a separation from good and this is Joringel's state when he aimlessly wanders into a strange village, pining for Jorinde (AC 4098) . Thankfully rather than wallow in self pity he takes up the occupation of a shepherd which symbolizes the act of distinguishing between truths of the church and knowledge that has been perverted (AC 6053). **This is where the significance of the village comes in. A village represents natural or memorized truths (AE 405). Going back to what we know and have memorized, what is familiar and constant, is important when we are trying to make significant spiritual distinctions. We have to come back to the basics so that we can deal with what is new and different. The fact that Joringel makes a point of seeking occupation is also important. Rediscovering an affection for the truth and that confidence we had in faith and doctrine doesn't just happen. We have to work to separate the falsities that have crept into our lives**

from the truths that we have always held in our hearts as the truth and that we truly believe.

Some time passes before Joringel has a dream. He sees a blood red flower with a beautiful pearl in its center. This flower is able to disenchant anything that it touches. Dreams represent divine revelation (AE 624). After all this spiritual work of separating the truths of the church from falsities, the Lord gives us that one last thing we need to get back out affection for truth. That thing is the flower which Joringel sees in a dream. Flowers represent memory-knowledge of the truth (AC 9553). A blood-red coloring of the flower and the pearl at its center all symbolize charity and the good of love, even the essence of love itself (AC 1000, 6379, 2967). Sometimes, it is the simple truths that are often taught to children that have the most power. Ultimate truths like: Love your neighbor, can take away the power of any falsity. Just as the flower undoes any enchantment, so does the teaching of charity rectify all evil. **All it takes is a simple touch from the flower to put all into its natural order. To touch represents a transfer (AE 79). Anything touched by what is holy and sacred becomes itself holy and sacred. Anything touched by what is unclean or polluted becomes unclean or polluted itself. This is what gives the flower its power. It transfers the teachings of love and charity to anything that comes in contact with it.** But just because Joringel has realized that this memory-knowledge of love and charity can reunite his truth with Jorinde's affection for it, doesn't mean his work is done. He has to find the flower first.

Joringel searches over hill and valley which correspond to loving the neighbor and external worship respectively (AC 795, 1292). The practice of love to the neighbor and worship even if it is all external can lead to genuine love, charity and internal worship. **He must search**

for nine days before he finally finds the flower in the early morning. Nine days signifies a regenerative state where all that is good and true have joined together and all that is evil and false have been joined (AE 6, 401). Through this long and hard search, we have come into a new state of clear perception represented by the early morning (AC 2673, 8427). The flower is just as it was in his dream except that instead of a pearl in the center, there is a dew drop that looks like a pearl. This is significant because dew corresponds to divine truth, but its resemblance to a pearl means that it is the divine truth of charity (AC 3579).

Finally, Joringel discovers the flower but still his mission is not complete. He carries the flower night and day until he reaches the castle in the middle of the woods. Day and night corresponds to a alternation of states in the intellect (AC 936). Even in the face of dark times or in places of low perception, our truth armed with a knowledge of charity keeps us from wavering in our doctrine and leads us straight on to face the falsity that first lead us astray.

The flower opens the door which represents charity allowing that which had been concealed to come out into the open (AE 303). Joringel hurries to find the room where the witch keeps her birds. **He hears the singing of the birds and follows the sound to where the birds are hidden. Hearing represents understanding the internal meaning of the word through revelation (AR 957). Just as Joringel can find his way through the castle so can we find our way through falsified and external doctrines to find the inner truth that we are searching for. When he comes upon her, the witch is feeding the birds. This symbolizes sustaining and growing a church, in this case, a false church (AR 547). The witch does all she can to keep affection for truth hidden away so that her reputation and power can remain. When she sees him, she spits poison and gall which represents acting against divine order with a**

motivation of self-love and contempt for what is good and true (AC 4839, 195, 5186). But the witch dares not come close to Joringel because of his powerful flower. Her power lies in falsity and evil so if she were to be touched by his charity (the flower) then she will lose that power. But Joringel is only concerned with rediscovering his Jorinde. It is not until the witch tries to escape with one of the birds that it becomes clear to Joringel which is the one he is looking for. This is the final test for our understanding of the truth after all this spiritual discovery. The wavering of doctrine, the separation of truth and falsity, and the revelation of the ultimate truth have all led to this last temptation. Falsity tries one more time to take away our love of the truth and our understanding of doctrine. But this time, Joringel is not powerless, he is not immobile. He stops her and touches her and the bird with the flower. Love and charity have won out and the falsity no longer has any power over us. We have a solid understanding of the truth and an infallible love for it.

After this spiritual ordeal, we are prepared to help others see through falsity and obscure doctrine. This is represented by Joringel touching all the birds with the flower and returning them to their true state.

Jorinde and Joringel represent our complete self, our truth and our affection for the truth, our knowledge and our motivation, our faith and charity. And yet, because of this struggle, we have become stronger. We have defeated the falsity and strengthened our doctrine and discovered the importance of love, charity and an affection for the truth.

We have come into our own faith separate from the truth of our childhood. We have be tried and tested and we have come out stronger than ever.

This happy ending gives me so much joy simply because it is so victorious. In the literal text it almost seems anticlimactic when on a spiritual level it is wonderfully triumphant and joyful. We all go through times of doubt, confusion and distress, but those hard times make our success that much sweeter. A tested faith that has stood strong is much more powerful than faith that has been taken at face value. As children we accept truth because it is what we are told, but as adults we have to find what we truly believe and why we believe it. That discovery is fraught with opportunities to wander off the path, to get tested by falsity. But it is those simple truths that help to reveal what is false and with them we can come into our own doctrine, our own affection for truth and walk out of the witch's castle a complete person ready to enter into full regeneration symbolized by the marriage of Jorinde and Joringel: the good and truth within us coming together as one and living happily ever after.

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AC 9154 sec. 3

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