

Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet): Key Points

Main idea: Constance Ledbelly needs to “individuate”: Carl Jung says that, typically, people in their mid-thirties seek to cast aside much of their socially constructed selves—their “personas” or masks—and find their authentic selves. This task is difficult. It requires that the seekers get to know the archetypes in their personal unconscious minds. (“Archetypes” include natural phenomena, patterns of behaviour and action, and resonant character types such as the Wise Fool, the Magician, the Great Mother, the Trickster, and scores more that derive from the many meaningful symbols in the collective unconscious of the human experience. *For an explanation of essential terms, see any competent Jungian primer.*) They must unite these often polarized and competing fragments. The seeker is helped by the Wise Fool archetype, the guide in all of us who knows who we really are—we just have to listen to what he or she is telling us. In many representations of the tarot, the Wise Fool takes his heart from his breast and holds it in front of him. Only by following it—despite the world’s opinion—will he find himself.

Connie’s governing archetypes are Desdemona, the warrior-woman (and animus) who is violent to others, and Juliet, the lovestruck adolescent (and anima) who is violent to herself. Connie is violent to others when she destroys the work of other academics. She is violent to herself when she wants to die for love. Both these archetypes have positive qualities: Desdemona’s assertiveness can help Connie shed her self-defeating “mouse” persona, and Juliet’s willingness to take emotional and erotic risks can help Connie get over Claude and remain open to the possibility of loving again.

However, Connie has allowed them to become extreme, and they are on the verge of literally killing her. She must understand and *dominate* these extreme tendencies in her psyche, which are brought out by the “shadow” archetype, Claude “Night.” The shadow, according to Jung, is the opposite of our conscious mind or ego and represents qualities and tendencies we dislike in ourselves and resist. When the shadow, too, is acknowledged, understood, and controlled, it can be very useful: Claude has galvanized Connie into producing splendid work. She just needs to learn to work on her own behalf. Similarly, she cannot simply throw away the “garbage” of her life, those experiences she finds negative and painful. Our garbage keeps reappearing to haunt us until we acknowledge it and integrate it into our “re-birthed” selves. As Jung says, “Individuation demands integration.”

The quest theme and structure of the pastoral-heroic cycle: This ancient plot template manifests many of Jung’s ideas about archetypes and individuation. Although endless variants are possible, the basic structure is as follows. There is a city of light and reason and good social order, typically walled, often on a hill. It is the centre of culture and civilization. All around is the wilderness, the “Green

World.” This term was coined by the Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye, but the concept has existed for millennia as an overriding archetype. The Green World is confusing, anarchic, and dangerous, but it is also creative, fertile, and hopeful.

Something goes wrong in the city of light and reason, perhaps a sickness, a lack of leadership or fertility, a terrible external menace—any problem that threatens its cohesion or survival. (Recall, too, that the templates of comedy and tragedy originate in response to any threat to fertility and social order.) A young hero arises to leave the troubled safety of the city and embark upon a quest into the Green World to find “the precious thing,” whatever it may be—a cure, a new leader, a piece of wisdom, an amulet—and restore the city. Typically, the hero is strong, intelligent, moral, and brave—but untried and often naïve or a bit arrogant. A common variant is the entirely unlikely hero, e.g. Frodo.

The quester encounters many obstacles and trials. Helpers and hinderers appear, often subtly disguised, and the hero sometimes can’t distinguish one from the other. Typically, the first trial is very obvious (e.g. some species of homicidal monster), and the hero is cocky in victory—only to fall into a more subtle trap (e.g. a sorcerer disguised as a holy pilgrim). Thus the hero learns prudence, humility, and wisdom.

The last obstacle or test can seem insurmountable, and the hero seems too dispirited, exhausted, or injured to deal with it. (In the Christian variant, a false comforter tries to seduce the hero into giving up and committing suicide, thus manifesting despair, the worst Christian sin.) At this point a helper—a mystical or parental figure or some manifestation of the hero’s comrade or true love—arrives to lend support, give advice, or impart a secret (e.g. a hint about the answer to a riddle). The hero overcomes the final obstacle and obtains “the precious thing,” which is sometimes actually less important than the transformation of the untried hero into a true leader of the city. The quester returns and restores the city of light and reason.

Connie’s “city” is her conscious mind and her workplace, Queen’s University. She is physically safe there, but she is mocked and exploited, deluded and unhappy. She won’t stand up for herself, and she is increasingly threatened by her own lack of integrity. When her conscious mind has run out of delusions and she reaches rock-bottom (what Jung calls the “nigredo,” blackening), her Wise Fool archetype forces her into the Green World of her unconscious mind to find what she needs: her individuated, fertile true Self. Her chief helper is this Wise Fool, part of her unconscious (symbolized by the Chorus/Ghost/Gustav Manuscript. “Gustav” is Carl Jung’s middle name, and it also suggests the middle way of the *golden mean*: nothing in excess. Note that MacDonald makes Gustav an alchemist, a seeker after gold.) In other words, Connie has known all along how to save herself from impending tragedy. She just doesn’t know that she knows because she isn’t listening to the promptings of her unconscious mind.

At the moment of her nigredo—Claude’s departure and the destruction of her dreams—the city of her conscious mind is under serious threat (she scripts herself a five-year passive suicide) and her unconscious mind can finally get her attention. She can now decipher the inscription on the manuscript and heroically enter her Green World of danger and fertility. Her main hinderers are Iago and

Tybalt, who actively scheme her death, and Othello, Desdemona, Romeo, and Juliet, who exploit her and eventually try to kill her. However, Desdemona and Juliet also help her before they go to extremes and turn on her: they make her face her shadow, Claude Night and the garbage of her past. Connie is about to give in to Juliet's flattery and kill herself for love when her Wise Fool warps in the Desdemona archetype to redress the balance. After dealing with the great menace of anti-fertility, Tybalt, she dominates her battling archetypes in a gutsy showdown and integrates them into a true, unfragmented Self.

Connie returns to Queen's and her conscious mind with "the precious thing," her individuated Self. Now she will apply her talents to fulfill herself, reform the stagnant kingdom of Queen's, and demand its respect.

The epigraph: MacDonald makes it clear that she will use Jungian themes, especially that of the Wise Fool helping the seeker on the quest for individuation. The reference to "crazy ideas" suggests not only the Wise Fool but also her thesis and elements of Old Comedy.

Significance of doubled and tripled roles: One actor plays the parts of Othello, Tybalt, and Claude Night. All these characters exploit Connie. All are humourless frauds and hypocrites. Connie must learn to see through them.

One actor plays Juliet and Student ("Julie, uh Jill"). Both these girls lie to Connie and flatter her for their own ends. They are immature, flighty, irresponsible, and manipulative, and they distract Connie from her quest with irrelevant trivialities. She must learn to say "no" to them.

One actor plays Desdemona and Ramona. Desdemona is wife to Othello, and Ramona will be wife to Claude. Both are brighter and braver than their men (Othello boasts about his exploits, but it's Desdemona who does all the slaughtering) but naïve in their attachments. They are aggressively self-confident and confrontational. Connie must learn to stand up to them.

The Dumbshow: This is literally a mime of the central event or events of the play to be performed (see "The Mousetrap" in *Hamlet* as an example). In the three vignettes we see the central tragedy of each play. However, Connie's unconscious mind will intervene to prevent these tragedies—most importantly, the tragedy that will result (the death of her true Self) if she resigns and throws away her pen and the Gustav Manuscript (symbols respectively of her true Self and unconscious mind).

Colloquially, it's "dumb" to make your life into a tragedy.

Connie's symbolic name: "Constance" suggests Lake Constance in Switzerland; contemplating its waters led Jung to theorize about the unconscious mind. "Constance" also suggests Connie's mousy predictability, her constancy in love, and the constant presence of her pen (i.e. she has the answer all along). A "cony" is a rabbit or a dupe, and to "con" means not just to fool someone but also, in Shakespearean language, to learn something by heart. Connie needs to learn herself by *heart* as opposed to head (the Wise Fool of the unconscious).

“Led” suggests the base-metal lead of alchemy but also the problem of being easily led. The belly is the centre of fertility, and Connie’s ten-year labour has profited only Claude. Once she has re-birthed herself and transformed her pen to gold, she is called “Constance L.” (Possibly significantly, “L” is in the middle of the alphabet.) Connie is also the “lead” character

The Prologue: The Chorus enters and draws attention to the idea of illusion by smoking and referring to mirrors (smoke and mirrors): the illusions of the stage and those of life. He focuses Jung’s metaphor of alchemy, a “symbolic system for the transformation of the human spirit from its lead-like state of ignorance into the gold of enlightenment.”

Jung’s metaphor is elucidated in his seminal 1944 work, *Psychology and Alchemy*. The *historical* process of alchemy was a hugely complex, fantastical, and bewildering practice which sought to convert base or “corrupted” metals into gold, considered the perfect balance of the elements of air, fire, earth, and water. It was thought that metals, which grew from seeds, would eventually purify themselves into gold, but this evolution could be accelerated by alchemy, specifically by the creation of the ineffable Philosopher’s Stone. The process required many stages, in which perceived opposites were combined, separated, and recombined in the alchemical vessel. One of these phases was the nigredo, or “blackening,” a mystical death of the materials before purification and resurrection.

Mercury, the major agent of transformation in the old alchemical experiments, has great significance. As an element, it embodies opposites: both liquid and solid. Like lead, it is heavy and grey. As “quicksilver,” it was once used to coat the mirrors the Chorus discusses. If one drops it, it shatters but can be recombined, just as Connie is shattered (dis-integrated) when she is “dropped” by Claude before fitting her fragments back together. As a god, Mercury (a.k.a. Hermes) is the messenger who communicates between the upper world and underworld (conscious and unconscious minds). The snakes of his caduceus—male and female, kissing each other—represent the underworld, and the wings represent the upper world. The caduceus also confers eloquence. In astrology, the planet Mercury is responsible for swift, eloquent communication. It rules Gemini, the twins, shown either as male and female or as one hermaphrodite. Many psychologists and philosophers including Jung have posited that we are all essentially bisexual. In Jungian psychology, the anima is the female aspect of the male psyche, and the animus is the male aspect of the female psyche.

Hermes Trismegistus, the Chaldean philosopher, was the hypothetical founder of “the hermetic art,” alchemy.

The Chorus tells us that Connie must bravely confront the conflicting archetypes in her unconscious mind, helped by her “Philosopher’s Stone,” the Gustav Manuscript. She must merge her archetypes and re-birth herself so that she sees in the mirror not her mouse persona but her true Self or soul. He rescues from the garbage the fountain pen and manuscript. If these remain discarded, Connie will never individuate and is doomed to tragedy.

The mirror can be a prison or a prism. If it reflects only the persona, one cannot find one's true Self. If the broken shards (the fragmented archetypes) can be reunited, their rainbow colours can combine to produce pure white light.

Act I, scene i: Connie is humming "Fairy Tales Can Come True" (the song's actual title is "Young at Heart"—MacDonald is punning on "Jung," "young" in German). She is living the wrong fairy tale, hoping to be rescued by Claude, her supposed "Knight" in shining armour. He is actually her shadow, "Night," who prevents her fertility. She must rescue herself; her real marriage will be "the mystic 'marriage of true minds,'" i.e. of her own archetypes. (Note that MacDonald freely uses quotations from Shakespearean works other than *Othello* and *R&J*, which usually appear in italics or quotation marks.)

She is dressed like an academic bag lady, projecting her "mouse" persona and stereotype of timid, unattractive, sexless loser. However, the red of her toque indicates passion. The toque, her real "fool's cap," makes her look ridiculous, the real fool as opposed to the Wise Fool. Her passion for her work is good, but her way of working is foolish: she is killing herself while "killing" others academically on behalf of her exploiter Night. The Wise Fool is manifested through the writing on her "foolscap" (so called because the original paper of this size had as its watermark a jester's cap and bells), the thesis that indicates she knows all along how to make her impending tragedy into a comedy.

Passion can become violence, and "greenness" or inexperience can mean gullibility. Near the end of the play, Connie accuses her archetype Desdemona of both. Red is the opposite of green, which symbolizes youth, naïvete, fertility, regeneration, and the Green World. Thus, both symbolic colours have helpful and unhelpful qualities. Her green pen represents her fertility, but it's almost hidden by the red fool's cap because she keeps it behind her ear. The red thus negates the green, and the wool suggests woolly thinking, woolgathering, and having the wool pulled over her eyes. It's also useful to recall the traffic light: red means stop and green means go. She achieves the gold in the middle, the golden mean—and also the mature gold of harvest, reaping the reward of her earlier efforts.

Connie is so intent on her work that she ignores the phone (just as Jill's visit is a distraction from Connie's real passion), but her mouse persona appears when she begins to nibble on bland, predictable Velveeta. Later, she will drink warm Coors Light and confess to taking package tours.

Connie's first spoken word is "Pen." Her pen is her means of manifesting her true Self, but she has allowed herself to be "penned" in the service of Claude. (Ultimately it proves to be mightier than the sword as she overcomes the murderous Tybalt with her superior intelligence.) She searches for it, but it has been behind her ear all along, i.e. she's always really known that her writing is the key to her individuation and happiness. It's a *fountain* pen, connoting the water necessary for fertility and the idea of a spring bubbling up from underground or the unconscious mind. "Spring" also happily implies fertility, greenness, and regeneration, and "spring water" is *eau de source*. Connie is looking for The Source.

Connie provides exposition by speaking aloud the text of her thesis as she writes, and characters from the two tragedies come onstage to play significant scenes. She claims that *Othello* and *R&J* aren't proper tragedies because they depend less on hamartia (the quality problematically defined as "tragic flaw" but really more like "frailty" or "error") than on "flimsy mistakes"—arbitrary plot elements, such as the handkerchief and the "delayed wedding announcement," that are traditionally the province of comedy.

She's interrupted by Jill, whose messing about with her essay under the door foreshadows the tugs of war that will kill Hector the turtle and almost kill Connie as the extremes of the Desdemona and Juliet archetypes fight for possession of her psyche. Connie's mistaken use of "Julie" for Jill identifies this lying little manipulator with the Juliet she will meet later.

Then Ramona visits. Her comments about the Coors beer (note that Connie can't even take responsibility for buying it herself) reveal her as a hypocrite: her scholarship is funded by the fortune established by arch-imperialist exploiter Cecil Rhodes. She is obviously impressed by Claude, a fellow hypocrite, and has no idea that Connie has been writing his great works.

Connie stands up to neither of these women, so she'll have to visit them in her unconscious mind to show them who's boss.

Mercutio calls Tybalt a "ratcatcher." In the fable *Reynard the Fox*, which Shakespeare's audience would have known well, Tybalt is King of Cats. Given Connie's mouse persona, he obviously poses great danger.

She gets to the nub of her thesis by stating her theory about the Gustav Manuscript, that it contains the key to Shakespeare's sources for the two tragedies: both comedies. Her idea is not as crazy as one might think. Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing* is "proved" unfaithful like Desdemona, and like Juliet she takes a friar's advice and feigns death, but the fool Dogberry blows the whistle on Don John's plot and sets all to rights.

Connie's pen runs out of ink when Claude Night enters. He is her shadow, Cloudy Night, who stands in her light and dries up her fertility. He is childish in frightening her (note that Professor "Night" "scare[s] the daylights out of" her) and speaks with a fake Oxford accent. Although he's her age, he's doing much better for himself. He patronizes and mocks her, rejecting her thesis but betraying selfish interest (if she's actually right, he can steal her work and become famous). When "he wipes his green-stained fingers on his handkerchief," he is rejecting her true Self. The action recalls *Othello*'s red-spotted handkerchief, and the scene anticipates Othello's story of spilling the inky green blood of the demon (Connie). He has her metaphorical blood on his hands.

Claude also flatters her, praising the work she's done for him so she'll keep slaving. Here we see both Juliet and Desdemona archetypes in action. His attention keeps Connie besotted, like Juliet. Then, like Desdemona beheading the Turkish foe and like Judith beheading Holofernes, Connie metaphorically decapitates Professor Hollowfern, one of Night's literary rivals. (Holofernes is also a pretentious pedant in Shakespeare's *Love's Labours Lost*.)

After teasing her with the diamond ring meant for Ramona, foreshadowing Othello's "gift" to Connie of the problematic diamond necklace intended for Desdemona, he announces his engagement to his brilliant young student, tells

Connie he's got her a job in Regina (= "Queen," so nothing will change from Queen's), and implies that she's getting old. He says he'll miss her. He certainly will. He might have tenure at Oxford, but he'll still have to produce papers, and Ramona won't be writing them. (She'll likely dump him when she realizes he's a fraud.) Connie asks if she is "going somewhere." She certainly is—on an unimaginable quest. Also, she reveals herself to be directed by others, putting her future in Night's hands.

The "day after tomorrow" is her birthday, and it suggests the three days of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ that, in turn, arises from the ancient fertility cycle of the dying and resurrected god/year.

As he leaves, he tugs her toque, both reinforcing the notion of pulling the wool over her eyes and loosening the hold of her real fool's cap. Devastated, she unconsciously drops it into the garbage. Then, Juliet-style, she scripts a disastrous, self-pitying tragedy for her life, in which the number five figures largely. The tragedy has five acts: in her bathetic version of the tragic fall, she will "sink that low in five years," just as her bird Laurel fell five *stories* to her death. Connie made her pen out of this loser of a bird, whom she caged and whose wings she clipped: she has caged herself and clipped her own wings. The bird sang "Volare" (flying) but couldn't fly the flight. When she had a chance at freedom, she was unprepared and unfit, so she died. "Laurel" refers to the laurel wreath awarded by the ancient Greeks to champion athletes and poets (hence "poet laureate"). It was worn behind the ears, where Connie keeps the pen. Laurel's death will be transformed into comedy because her feather (birds symbolize the human spirit) will be used to write Connie's life into a new and better existence. The gravity (tragedy) that causes the fall will be redeemed by levity (comedy). Connie will rise again.

(Note that, in her fantasy, Connie has lost her pen and is selling pencils, which were formerly made of lead.)

Interestingly, there are also five men—Night, Othello, Iago, Romeo, and Tybalt—who cause her grief. There are eight items in the garbage can, *five* representing her loser status and tragedy (the beer can, the cigarette butt, the appendix, the Brownie wings, and the toque) and *three* pages of the manuscript, representing her wiser unconscious mind and comedy. (See below, re "threes.")

The five "tragic" items would seem to represent the four elements (Coors can, appropriately water; cigarette butt, fire; appendix, earth—we are created from clay; and wings, air) plus the "quintessence" of tragedy, the toque.

Connie throws away these artefacts—the bag-lady's Player's Extra Light cigarette butt; the mousy, downmarket Coors beer can; the base-metal wings, a gift from her pack of Juliet-Brownies for being a pushover; and her appendix, symbol of her martyrdom (she missed Expo while everyone else had fun), appropriately kept in a baby-food jar. These symbols will reappear in Cyprus and Verona because "one can't throw away the garbage" of one's life.

Her unconscious mind stops her trashing her pen, and it intervenes just in time to stop her trashing the manuscript: suddenly, she can read its inscription. She has reached nigredo, and her unconscious is demanding she pay attention before it's too late. She is warped into the garbage can to deal with her garbage and discover that "one plus two makes one, not three," i.e. that Connie (or the

Wise Fool) plus Desdemona plus Juliet add up to one new, improved, integrated, individuated Connie.

The Chorus arrives to re-cap what has just happened and reinforce the Jungian concept of Connie's journey into her unconscious mind. Iago's first word, "Think," indicates that Connie needs to start really thinking for a change, and his last word, "*Indeed*" (*italics mine*) suggests she will also have to take action.

Act II, scenes I and ii: Connie's trip to Cyprus helps her get in touch with her Desdemona archetype, which helps her learn to assert herself. However, this archetype becomes extreme and turns on her when goaded by Iago, the humourless death-principle of tragedy.

Initially, Connie's mouse persona tries to make her back down from her quest. She's shocked at her own temerity in "sav[ing] the baby [Desdemona] and let[ting] the Mona [*Othello*] drown." However, in terms of the pastoral-heroic cycle, exposing Iago's ill-concealed plot is the first, easy task. Her challenges will become more physically and psychologically demanding. She only just overcomes them. Connie is also still expecting others to define her, provide direction, and solve her problems. In seeking the Wise Fool and the Author, she doesn't yet know she is seeking her true Self.

(It's typical that the self-defeating mouse chooses to live with cats, who'll "eat the plants," symbols of green fertility, and will themselves procreate lustily to create more havoc.)

Note Connie's reference to the Sargasso Sea, an allusion possibly borrowed from Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman* (with which work there are many parallels). This sea is a fertile but dangerous micro-climate in the Bermuda Triangle, an area which has supposedly swallowed ships and aircraft. The Chorus has indicated that those who undertake the quest into this green world are not guaranteed a return. The "triangle" refers to Connie, Desdemona, and Juliet.

As Connie talks to Desdemona, she must finally face the first humiliating reality of her relationship with Claude Night: he used her. Initially she tries to excuse him, just as she tries to smooth the way for everyone she allows to exploit her. When Desdemona goads her to "slay Professor Night!", Connie reaches a mature compromise in her understanding: his behaviour was wrong, *but she has been complicitous*. Nevertheless, once her Desdemona archetype is in full play, it begins to dominate. She is increasingly angry with her treatment by the English Department and recalls a lifetime of being bullied. (MacDonald provides in the first recollection an enjoyable set piece inveighing against the bullying "bullshit" of the English Department and in the second the "fives" motif and a sly allusion to the *Macbeth* witches' brew in that "dog-tongue sandwich"—which is actually just "ham" acting by her persecutors.) Connie fantasizes bloody revenge on Claude, then almost kills Iago.

She enjoys this revelation of her power, but she is out of control, and her faint indicates that this behaviour does not reflect her true Self. Thus Desdemona now tries to kill her. Othello, too, has proved himself a false friend. His "singing beast" speech suggests that he means Connie no good. She is the beast that tended the golden ox (Claude) and eased his way over the shallow ford to "Ox-

ford,” and for her devotion she is killed by Othello (again, Claude). The equation of Othello and Claude is clarified by the diamond episode, by his exploitation of her skills, by his patronizing attitude, by his pat on her head as he leaves, and by Connie’s last words to him: “Night ’night.” hilariously, Othello has just referred to “night soil” or excrement, recalling Night’s “bullshit” and anticipating Connie’s characterization of him (in her encounter with Juliet) as a “shit.”

Connie discovers her bronze Brownie-wings (symbol of her Juliet archetype and thus foreshadowing her coming trip) on the hem of Desdemona’s dress. These inflexible, base-metal wings are about to be transformed into real agents of flight as she escapes one extreme and flies to another. As the manuscript page and the wings imply, she’s gone too far in the Desdemona direction and needs to redress (*redress?*) the balance.

As Desdemona lunges at her, Connie is warped away to Verona. Instead of being skewered, she is saved by a symbol of androgyny, the sword in the skirt. This symbol anticipates the mercurial gender-bending that provides much of the comedy in the play, reflection on gender roles, and allusion to the anima and animus. Several of Shakespeare’s plays feature brave young women who, for one reason or another, disguise themselves as boys or young men. Reflect that, in Shakespeare’s day, boys played women; in other words, boys played women who disguised themselves as boys. Gender-bending, indeed.

Act III, scenes i-vii: Connie’s trip to Verona is arranged by that travel agent of transformation, Mercury, and it is fitting that the first words she hears in that city are spoken by Mercutio, the mercurial wit. Her encounter with her Juliet archetype helps her learn that being in love is not in itself a bad thing. The heart should stay open to new possibilities of love. However, this archetype, too, becomes extreme and turns on her, convincing her that suicide is the grand romantic gesture that will make her immortal. Tybalt, the ultimate symbol of tragedy—infertility and humourlessness—stalks her from the outset, prompting the Ghost’s warning, “Beware of Tybalt. He hath not a sense of humour.”

Connie’s mouse persona is less prominent now. She boldly prevents the tragedy of *R&J*, and when she attends the masked ball she is “wearing a stupid Mouse *half-mask*” (*italics mine*). But the persona manifests itself in a panic-stricken desire to abandon the quest, and she is still expecting outside forces to solve her problems.

In the second tug-of-war, Romeo and Juliet childishly fight over their pet turtle Hector and thus destroy him: going to extremes (push-pull, back and forth) is tragic. (Hector, in *The Iliad*, is torn between his duty to his brother and his duty to the institution of marriage. He is ultimately slain and his body torn.) Their ridiculous marriage is the result of adolescent hormones and hyper-romanticism. After one night they are sick of each other, and both try to draw Connie into their plans for wild passion and suicide.

As Connie talks to Juliet she must finally face the second humiliating reality of her relationship with Claude Night: she loved him and still does. Juliet’s solution is suicide. Significantly, Connie demurs, insisting that her “quest . . . means more to [her] than love or death.” This is a huge step. She is aided in her quest for the Author, Fool, and Self by the Ghost (the Chorus), whose silly jokes are the

reminder from her unconscious that it's comedy that prevents tragedy. However, Connie can't yet understand his riddling and punning; just as she previously lacked the eyes to see the hints in the inscription, now she lacks the ears to hear. More work is necessary, but she does learn from the encounter that "The Fool and the Author are one in [sic] the same."

Tybalt attacks her. Her appendix has re-appeared on the end of his sword, implying literally that she's about to be gutted. Symbolically, it represents her need to grow up, stop wallowing in martyrdom, and take action. However, the action she takes—agreeing to Tybalt's challenge and trying to best him with her sword—is foolish. She needs to use her intelligence, her real strength. Once again, once she's gone too far (to her macho Desdemona side), she is rescued by a symbol of androgyny. Tybalt's sword gets stuck in "Romiet's" dress.

True to form, Juliet has lied to her and now wants Connie to kill her. Significantly, Connie tells this archetype of herself, "Hang on! There's no need to overreact!" Indeed.

MacDonald uses Juliet's enthusiastic newfound lesbianism to explore Jungian ideas of inherent bisexuality. "Ginnie Radclyffe" is a symbolic name, alluding to "Virgin-ia," the all-female and elite Radcliffe College, and the lesbian writer Radclyffe Hall.

Juliet is persuasive; her loving flattery weakens Connie's resolve to complete her quest. This is the most dangerous point in her pastoral-heroic cycle. She wants to give in to her shadow, the eternity of "night," and is actually upset when she gets another message from her unconscious in the form of the second manuscript page. It warns her that she's gone to her other extreme and that the Desdemona archetype is needed to re-establish balance. But she's still intent on dying with Juliet, and it's not until Desdemona warps in and attacks her that she acts to save herself.

Again using her wits in desperate circumstances, Connie manages to extract the diamond necklace from under Desdemona's smothering pillow and show her the inscription that clears her of wrongdoing. (Note the second instance of an inscription that can now be understood, versus Claude's inability to read her green handwriting.) Connie's recovery from near death and her sarcastic comment "Happy Birthday" emphasize the ancient pattern of death and resurrection.

Connie at last takes charge of her archetypes. Still thinking on her feet, she issues orders and then plays dead—setting the scene for another alchemical resurrection—instead of foolishly fighting Tybalt and risking real death.

Act III, scene viii: True to form and in fact recalling Shakespeare's original, Romeo forgets about "Constantine" and now falls in love with Desdemona.

Act III, scene ix: [Note that this is the last scene proper of the play and that "Act III, scene ix" plays on the idea of threes. Recall that "five" stands for tragedy (Connie's ten years of infertility working for Night are represented by the two tragedies: 2 x 5), whereas "three" suggests the three manuscript pages, the three days of her quest, the fertile integration of the three women, and thus comedy.]

The *R&J* “crypt” in which the scene takes place suggests both the encryption of the knowledge in her unconscious, as manifested by the Gustav manuscript, and the death that precedes resurrection.

Tybalt reveals himself to be a complete hypocrite. Having ranted about the “hermaphrodite” Constantine corrupting his kin, he makes off with the transvestite Romiet—but not before he shows sexual interest in a (supposedly) male corpse, which he justifies to himself as “scientific” curiosity. There can be nothing less fertile than homosexual necrophilia, an image that not only emphasizes the concept of tragedy but also shows that it can be ridiculous.

With Tybalt defeated by brains rather than brawn, Connie now reads the riot act to Desdemona and Juliet. In this final tug-of-war they are battling for possession of her psyche: if either wins, Connie will die. Happily, in her vital “Nay nay!!” speech, she reveals that she has lost her mouse persona not through killing others or herself but through wisely understanding and disciplining the unruly archetypes in her psyche. She makes the two understand that life is not about absolutes and extremes and eternities and death but about “gorgeous mixed-up places”; it’s a “rich Sargasso stew” that brings “inspiration.” Reflecting on her foolishness, she now has the ears to hear the punning of her unconscious helper and realizes that she is the Wise Fool and the Author—of her own existence. It’s up to her to write the life script she wants for herself. She and nobody else is the Author-ity on her own true Self.

A golden hand now rises up from the slab on which Connie had been lying, representing resurrection and the completion of the alchemical process. The third page of the Gustav Manuscript confirms the integration of her archetypes but offers a subtle warning about expecting perfection. Life, it suggests, is a process and a cycle, a truth that Connie acknowledges in her comment “Goodnight Desdemona. Good morning Juliet.” The merging of “good” and “night” suggests that the shadow can be good: it’s the necessary antithesis of and precursor to the morning.

Desdemona and Juliet, who significantly “share the self-same stars” as Connie, now wish her a happy birthday. At the beginning the Chorus has offered her “a double-edged re-birthday,” and now indeed these three-in-one are resurrected into a new life. Interestingly, it is also now the third day of the month (see pages 8 and 19 and do the math).

The transformation scene at the end reifies the idea of integration as the characters begin to trade articles of clothing. The comic mandate is reinforced with the celebration of the birthday/s and the giving of gold-wrapped gifts. Unlike the wedding-feast finale of *New Comedy*, the marriage here is that of Connie’s archetypes, “the mystic ‘marriage of true minds’”; the fertility is that of her mind.

Now back in her office (Queen’s and her conscious mind), Connie realizes that the true fool’s cap, her red toque, is gone forever. It is replaced by the now golden pen. The tragic naïve bird Laurel has become a golden phoenix, rising from its own death to crown Connie with the laurel wreath of the victorious poet.

The Epilogue: The Chorus arrives to re-cap the process of Connie’s individuation. She has dared to “say ‘boo’” to her shadow and has thus completed

her quest and the alchemical process. The “grey matter” which she has spun into “precious gold” may be seen as her brains, mercury, her mouse persona, and of course the lead of her unindividuated self, and it may also refer to the middle ground between black and white extremes.

For your interest: Many parallels exist between this play and Frank L. Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Both Dorothy and Connie, “small and meek,” begin in a “grey” world and are swept away by miraculous means to a green world where they encounter characters the doubles of those they have left back home. In their quest to return “home” (Kansas; the conscious mind) they demonstrate undreamt-of courage and wit, speak truth to fraudulence and hypocrisy, and ultimately realize that all along they have had the means of returning—in the first case, the red slippers (on Dorothy’s feet), and in the second, the green pen (on Connie’s head). There’s no place like home if you *want* it to be home.

Hilary Knight prepared the original notes to help her students with this most densely meaningful play. She hopes this expanded version will assist all seekers on their quest for fulfilment.