

THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR [1947]

by

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Mrs. Lucy Muir (Jean Tierney) decides to leave the oppressive household of her mother-in-law and her sister-in-law a few months after her husband's death. She, along with her daughter, Anna (Natalie Wood), and her maid, Martha (Edna Best), move into a sea-side cottage. It is priced attractively low because it is haunted. The ghost of Captain Daniel Gregg (Rex Harrison), a former sea captain, has run off all the previous would-be tenants. However, Mrs. Muir stands up to the ghost, they eventually come to an agreement and decide to share the house, each proposing certain conditions. When the income from the gold shares that Mrs. Muir depends on turns sour, Gregg suggests that she write a novel based on his exploits as a sailor. This is accepted for publication and her financial problems are solved. However, while at the publishers, she meets an attractive man, Miles Fairley (George Sanders), with whom she promptly falls in love. After leading her on and even proposing marriage, much to the chagrin of Gregg (which she interprets as jealousy), Fairley turns out to be married, a cad who often plays this game with unsuspecting, emotionally vulnerable women. She now realizes that she is hopelessly in love with the ghost and wants nothing more to do with men of flesh and blood. She gracefully and happily grows old in her isolation. When she dies, she and the Captain are finally and happily united in the same plane of existence.

Let me begin by stating that, unlike most ghost stories, there is nothing scary in the usual sense about *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*. Perhaps the best comparison is to *The Uninvited* which appeared three years earlier in 1944 (interestingly it has the same excellent cinematographer, Charles Lang, Jr.). *The Uninvited* is a truly frightening film – the ghosts are real, troubled and uncompromising. And there is no trick ending to the film. It is easy to see these scary ghosts as negative elements emanating from the unconscious that refuse to be repressed. Seemingly on their own, they break through the barrier between the conscious and the unconscious realms to terrorize our conscious lives. Film ghosts are most often metaphors for what Freud would call the Id and what Jung would call the negative aspects of the Shadow. This accounts for quite a few famous ghosts.

The ghost of Hamlet's father is perhaps the most famous ghost in literature. It is possible that this ghost represents, in part (Shakespeare never gives us anything linear or simple), Hamlet's own incestuous feelings toward his mother which he refuses to face. He displaces these feelings into an acceptable figure – his father. However, since his father is dead, it must be his father's ghost. And since the situation, as it is set up in the play, is unresolvable, it must end in death. Another famous set of ghosts, a little more obvious than Hamlet's father, are the ghosts of *A Christmas Carol*. Within the context we

have built here, it is pretty obvious that the three ghosts – Christmas Past, Present, and Future – are the undeveloped possibilities of Scrooge’s personality. Corresponding to Jung’s idea that the Shadow contains not only the negative and ugly, but also the potential positive, Scrooge opts for expanding his personality and integrating a very large, and very positive aspect of his Shadow that, up until this time, he had repressed.

In fact, Mrs. Muir meets three men in her life: her husband (a weakling who represents love past), the dishonest suitor (who represents the realities of the current world), and the sea captain (who represents the possibilities of love transcendent and extending into the infinite future). In many ways, these three men correspond to Dickens’ three ghosts of *The Christmas Carol*.

The opening scenes of the film immediately set the mood. Under the titles we see a shoreline, the border between land and sea. Since the sea often represents the unconscious and land consciousness, we must take it that the film will be about that thin line, the barrier that, in this case, precariously separates these two psychic realms. This symbolism is reconfirmed by the fact that Captain Gregg is a sea captain, even in life he was a denizen of the symbolic unconscious, and since his death, even more so. Lucy and all her acquaintances are creatures of the land and know little of the sea. They live, presumably undisturbed in their naïveté, in the secure world of consciousness. Of course, all this is about to change.

That change is symbolized in the very next image we see. From a high view we see London, as the titles inform us, at the turn of the century. But this view of London is a very specific one: the Thames River and a number of bridges. As symbolic connections between one area of life and another, perhaps even the known and the unknown, bridges cannot be bested. Imagine a medieval knight leaving on his mythical quest: the first step (literally) of his adventure is to leave the comforts of the castle and venture into the unknown of the dragon-infested forests by crossing over the castle’s draw bridge. Thus, when we see not one, but three bridges, we know that connections between the known and the unknown will be made in multiplicities.

The camera then moves slowly through (Hollywood’s version of) a London street scene. A somber cast pervades: the carriages that drive past are all covered, and the horses move slowly, all the pedestrians walk with slow intent, no one looks up, all are downcast. No one runs, no children scamper, no horses trot. The trees are bare of leaves. The very first words we hear are the key to the film, “My mind ...” This London is the area of the mind, of consciousness. The completion of this sentence immediately sets the tone of the film regarding the role of women, “My mind is made up.”

The conversation is between Lucy Muir, her mother-in-law, Eva (Victoria Horne), and her grandmother. Lucy sits on the right – the side of goodness – while her mother-in-law – the most negative female figure in the film – sits opposite her, on our far left. The grandmother, who really can’t make up her mind about anything, is caught between them, and sits in the middle. Lucy announces her intent to move out. Having mourned her

husband for a year, she feels she must go on with her life – and her life doesn't involve her in-laws.

Lucy will take her daughter Anna and their maid, Martha, to live independently. She intends to support herself from her husband's gold shares. The fact that Lucy's income comes specifically from gold is interesting. Gold, by its color, is often associated with the solar principle, and thus the masculine. So, it is appropriate that the gold is her husband's. Also, gold, as something valuable, may symbolize the true self, as distinct from the conscious ego, or some faculty of the psyche which, if activated and accepted, will bring one to the real self. The alchemists took this idea even further with the maxim, "*Aurum nostrum non est aurum vulgi*," "Our gold is not the gold of the masses," suggesting that for the alchemist "gold" did not refer literally to the metal, but rather to esoteric knowledge, the highest state of spiritual development. This symbol clearly illuminates not only Lucy's current state, but her future possibilities. Yet, as we shall see, this external manifestation of the internal, perhaps *because* of its association with the masculine, is not the correct path for Lucy's psychic growth. The wife cannot live and prosper – psychically – on her husband's gold; she must find her own.

So, Lucy gathers her daughter and her maid and takes the train to Whitecliff-by-the-Sea. We immediately know that all will not be well, that danger lurks here, but the outcome will be positive. For is this not the obvious interpretation of where she has chosen to live – Whitecliff? She will indeed fall off a cliff, but not to destruction, but into purity, into whiteness.

Once at Whitecliff, Lucy consults a rental agency to find a home within her meager budget. Mr. Coombes (Robert Coote) is caught eating an egg – many men in this film have no trouble nourishing themselves (her husband in a love-less marriage of convenience, the dandy Miles, and so on). To accomplish the same self-nourishment, women must make an effort. Furthermore, the three owners of the agency are now long dead, yet their names still persist – older, dead values, like those of Eva and the grandmother survive as yet unchallenged. Mrs. Muir is of a younger generation, one that nourishes itself, ready to step in and replace the moribund older values represented by Mr. Coombes (rhythms with "tombs") and his ilk. This is true on the external plane – as Lucy's assertiveness makes plane – and at the internal, psychic level.

The fact that Mr. Coombes is eating an egg has several meanings. First, he is partaking of a sphere, of wholeness; yet we will soon find out that he is pretty much a spineless wimp. Second, he is partaking of the future (eggs becomes chickens, etc.). Finally, he is eating something associated with the feminine. Again, many of the men in this film devour the feminine, especially Miles.

While Mr. Coombes pointedly avoids offering Gull Cottage to Mrs. Muir and hides the paperwork from her, her curiosity causes her first to read about it, and be immediately attracted to it – sight unseen. Here we see her strong, almost overpowering intuition positively guiding her life and psychic progress. The name of the house, of course, is very significant – Gull Cottage. Birds are symbols of the spirit, their flight

often represents freedom. Gulls in particular are birds that function equally well in the water (the symbolic unconscious) and the land (the symbolic conscious). Thus, Lucy's new house seems perfectly named for the adventure about to take place.

Mr. Coombes drives Mrs. Muir to Gull Cottage in his motor car – In that day a rare device, a symbol of progress and modernity. Yet Mr. Coombes is not Lucy's future, her destiny lies not in the outer worlds of technology and material progress, but rather in inward exploration. Mr. Coombes, his motor car, and all it represents can have no effect on her. To make this point clear, on the way to the cottage we see them passing a large flock of very passive sheep. Here are the Coombes of the world.

Gull Cottage, of course, is haunted. Mr. Coombes has great trepidations and is even afraid to set foot in the place. Lucy naively marches about the house admiring it. She instinctively falls in love with the decoration which reflects the sea. However, she hates the monkey puzzle tree. It ruins the view of the sea, which, symbolically blocks the connection between the conscious land and the unconscious sea. In addition, it is a tree that no one can climb, and is thus the opposite of the tree of life or the tree of knowledge. At Lucy's announcement that she will have it chopped down, the ghost makes itself known. The ghost, then, represents not only a barrier between the conscious and the unconscious, but also a barrier to self-knowledge, being the one who planted the unclimbable tree.

At this point the ghost does not want Lucy to occupy the house. Psychologically, she experiences resistance from the unconscious elements that she has perhaps unwittingly activated. A barrier exists that must be overcome before any further progress can be made. We are all familiar with such barriers: the Hero must overcome barriers on the Hero's Journey. However, these are typically male-oriented barriers, ones that can be taken by brute force or trickery. Here is something different, something that applies to women. The barrier is an internal one, one between the ego and the internal masculine, the Animus. And it is her Animus in the form of the ghost that now resists penetration by scaring her out of the house. Notice that it is "upstairs" that she first encounters the ghost, that is, at the higher levels of consciousness.

Another interesting touch is that the house is dirty and dusty everywhere. Everywhere, that is, except the upstairs telescope. Lucy notes that it alone of all the objects in the house, is clean. This portends a clearness of vision. Lucy concludes that the previous owner used it to look at the sea. Thus, we can conclude that Lucy's clear vision, once achieved, will be into her own unconscious.

While Coombes finds the haunting frightening, Lucy finds it fascinating. While the unconscious may throw up barriers, it is equally attractive to the psychic seeker. Lucy, more on intuition than reason, decides to move in. Revealingly, she takes Coombes' remark that she is the most obstinate woman he has ever met as a compliment. Needless to say, at the turn of the century (and in 1942 when the film was made), the feminine ideal was pliability and conformity rather than obstinacy. In the area of gender politics, *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* is quite revolutionary.

In the very next scene, the family has moved in, and we suddenly learn that they have a small dog. Dogs are frequently symbols of both fealty – as in “man’s best friend” (Lassie) – and, more importantly here, instinct. Perhaps the best filmic example of a dog representing instinct is the relation between Toto and Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. Toto is always getting Dorothy into trouble, from the beginning of the film with Mrs. Gultch to the end, when he causes Dorothy to miss her easy balloon ride back to Kansas. However, it is always just the right kind of trouble at just the right time to help Dorothy on her psychological journey of maturation from a helpless and attention-needing child to an independent and responsible young woman. In *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*, it is comforting to know that the family's instinctual faculties have been so clearly materialized.

Martha, the maid, suddenly and unknowingly begins to speak the language of the sea, “Everything is ship shape and Bristol fashion.” Apparently, all who enter this house will come under the influence of the masculine presence within it. Of course, the timing couldn’t be better. The dog – Instinct – trots across her newly scrubbed floor – the psychological *tabula rasa* of their new lives – and Martha suddenly becomes sensitive to Lucy's newly-wakened Animus. Once activated, Lucy’s Animus begins to affect not only Lucy, but those around her. And since Lucy’s growing relationship with it is very positive, the others are affected positively.

Lucy now goes upstairs to take a nap, that is, she enters the area of higher consciousness – the place where the “clean” telescope resides – in order to consciously enter into the unconscious. This bodes well, for to enter into the unconscious unknowingly or unprepared is a dangerous venture, especially with “ghosts” lurking about. Thus, going to “sleep” “upstairs” is a perfect time for the entry of the ghost. Lucy closes the window that is the barrier between the house and the sea is shut. In doing so, she scratches herself – blood is drawn. We are getting deeply – blood deep – into the matter. With these preparations, she sits down for her nap. Significantly, in terms of the symbolism we have set up, the ghost’s first act is to open the window Lucy has closed, that is, he is opening the door between Lucy’s conscious and unconscious, or, more specifically between Lucy and her Animus as materialized in the form of Captain Gregg.

As Gregg appears, we see an interesting sequence of events. First, we are shown the clock at 4 o’clock. The dog growls – of course, instinct would warn us of the danger of consorting with manifestations of the unconscious. Then, almost immediately it is 5 o’clock. We learn that ghosts, like other manifestations of the unconscious – dreams and fantasies – transcend space and time. Lucy wakes up to find that the window she has so carefully shut is now open, that is, the door to her unconscious is open. Martha comes in, fusses about, and off-handedly mentions that she has a nice piece of fish for the dog! Now, if the pet were a cat, all would be well, but what is Martha doing feeding fish to a dog? Psychologically it makes sense: Lucy’s instinct (the dog) must be nurtured (food) from the unconscious (the sea). This is a symbolically and psychologically complex and key scene. But so far Lucy has not encountered the ghost directly.

Lucy goes to the kitchen to fill a hot water bottle and instead meets Captain Gregg in the flesh – so to speak. At first, he extinguishes the match with which she wants to light the stove, then he douses the light illuminating the kitchen. At this point in their relationship, he denies her both warmth and light. However, when she begins to speak to him, to face the ghost, to exert her personal power, the ghost's first words are, appropriately, "Light the candle." Thus, the manifestation of her unconscious masculine is offering her – literally – illumination.

There is next a discussion about the cause of Capt. Gregg's death. Keep in mind that Capt. Gregg represents the internal masculine, the Animus, that Lucy has had little contact with. Gregg explains that he didn't commit suicide, as is popularly assumed, but that his death was accidental. If we look at these types of death as psychological metaphors, we can see that the difference is quite significant to the prospects of Lucy's integration of these aspects of her unconscious. Suicide is an intentional act – its psychological parallel might be called "conscious repression." This, of course, would be very unhealthy for the psyche because then even the conscious mind would be complicit in restricting its growth. So it is with great relief that we learn that Capt. Gregg's death was accidental, or, in terms of the psychological metaphor we have proposed, not directly under the control of the conscious mind. In this case, recovering these lost aspects is far easier for her than if their repression had been so thoroughly controlled by the conscious mind. And, indeed, Capt. Gregg does materialize to her, and even has a conversation with her – she is, perhaps for the first time in her life, getting in touch with the masculine aspects of her own psyche.

And as soon as Lucy makes contact with her Animus, it begins to protect her. Capt. Gregg opened the window while she was asleep because he didn't want another accidental death by gas leak. Thus, even this first tentative and unconscious (during sleep) contact with the unconscious is already bearing fruits. Gregg offers resistance to Lucy's presence in the house. After an argument and conversation, they come to a compromise. It is her love of the house – a metaphor for her own psyche – that convinces Gregg to allow her to stay. Of course, we can predict that if Lucy loves the whole house/psyche, she will also fall in love with many of its elements, i.e., Capt. Gregg.

We also learn that Lucy's first encounter with Capt. Gregg, something she thought to be a dream – and a frightening one at that – was really his attempt to protect her from poisoning by gas. Again, this is psychologically sound. Almost any encounter with the unconscious, if undertaken honestly, no matter how frightening, can be ultimately beneficial.

It seems quite appropriate to me that this scene ends in an exact mirror image of the way it began. At first, Capt. Gregg denies Lucy warmth and light. Now, after learning of her willingness, nay her eagerness to face her Animus, Capt. Gregg exits by commenting that her kettle of water is about to boil over, that is, it now has so much heat and warmth that it is on the verge of become larger than its container. A few moments later, he turns on all the lights in the kitchen, flooding the room around Lucy with an illumination so bright that it almost hurts our eyes.

The next day, Gregg and Lucy have an argument about the Monkey Puzzle Tree versus Roses. I have already looked at this tree in terms of it blocking Lucy's view of the ocean and being a barrier to knowledge. I find it significant that she wants to replace it with roses. Roses will not only provide an unobstructed view of the ocean but are also a symbol of transcendence and resurrection – a path that Lucy has clearly embarked upon.

We now get an insight into Lucy's previous psychological life – a discussion of why she married her husband, Edwin. (The name Edwin, by the way means, "Rich Friend." This, it turns out, was her eventual relationship with him – friendship, not love.) One day in her youth, she had just finished reading a romantic novel in which the heroine was kissed in a rose garden (notice that Lucy has now planted her own rose garden) and lived happily ever after. So, when Edwin kissed her in an orchard, she tried to play out a life script from the novel she identified with. Of course, it didn't work out very well; it was a love-less marriage and Edwin turned out to be mediocre in all his aspects – as an architect, as a husband, as a provider, and, presumably, as a lover. Now his role is to provide us a nice contrast by which we can note Lucy's growth.

Capt. Gregg now tells Lucy about the sea. His description turns out to be a wonderful collection of psychological metaphors – men go to sea because they are too foolish to stay on shore, Heaven help the seaman, life on the sea is cruel, and so on. All this time, Lucy is winding a ball of yarn, making a sphere out of a string, slowly building her Self out of what had been strung out and useless. And, taking the yarn connection a little further, like one of the Fates, she is now taking control of her own destiny.

Her in-laws brutally inform her that her husband's investments have collapsed, and she is now penniless. She is faced with giving up the house and her growing interaction with the ghost. Gregg invites her to stay and promises a solution. Her growing relation with her Animus has evolved from confrontation to accommodation and now become active support. The chance she has taken in facing her Animus at this time begins to pay off. The exploration of her unconscious has stirred forces that now, at least to some extent, reinforce her and invite her to continue that exploration. Even her vocabulary changes, becoming laced with maritime expressions. The circle grows and widens.

Gregg's solution to Lucy's financial problem is to write a biography of a sea captain – in reality, an only slightly disguised autobiography. This impending collaboration brings them closer together – he asks her to call him by his first name, Daniel. And then he gives her a "power" name – Lucia – a name, as he puts it, "fit for an Amazon." (Lucia is derived from the Latin meaning daybreak.) This is similar to the initiation ritual in many non-technological cultures in which young persons go into isolation until they discover, by some manifestation of the collective unconscious, their true name. Here it is offered her quite directly by her Animus made manifest in the form of Capt. Gregg. After this initiation, she receives instructions when she doubts his reality: "I'm here because you believe I'm here . . . and keep on believing and I'll always be real to you." Good psychological advice for someone who has just made peace with a difficult

part of their own unconscious. Later, when there is but a single chapter of their book left to write, Lucy is exhausted. Yet, when he uses her power name, Lucia, she suddenly springs to life.

The novel is obviously a man's tale. It is fair for us to ask the same question her publisher asks her, "How does a woman know about all this men's stuff?" It is not unusual for creativity, when inspired by the Contra Gender Function – in this case the Animus – to take on aspects and to use the knowledge of the opposite gender. Perhaps the greatest literary examples of this are the stories of Frankenstein and Dracula. Frankenstein is, among many other things, a tale of failed male puberty. To recognize that the "Creature" is a male puberty figure we need only described him: he is too big for his clothes, he feels he's made out of pieces that don't fit together, he has great difficulty in expressing himself, he unintentionally knocks things over and hurts other people, and, finally, all he really wants is a girlfriend, but he just doesn't know how to go about it. On the other hand, the story of Dracula is, among other things, one of female puberty. Consider these common fantasies: a young woman dreams of an older man who is suave, debonair, well-dressed and foreign. First menarche is symbolized by the young woman's first bleeding under the aegis of the vampire. Furthermore, adolescent unconscious sexual confusion is seen as the displaced oral sex and penetration – all of which leads to an indescribable pleasure. Now, the point of all this is that this phenomenally perceptive description of male puberty was written by a woman and the deeply understanding and sympathetic description of female puberty was written by a man! These examples can be multiplied many times. This is, I believe, clear evidence for the strong participation of the Contra Gender Function in creativity.

This appears not only in the world of literature, but in films, too. For instance, in *The Philadelphia Story* [1940], Katherine Hepburn lovingly calls the yacht that her current ex-husband Cary Grant build for her, "yar." We are shocked that this thoroughly feminine and thoroughly civilized woman would know such an obscure nautical term. We can deduce from this that her love for Grant comes from the deepest reaches of her unconscious, the place where the sea-faring Animus he represents dwells. With this realization, we can easily predict the outcome of the film: Hepburn and Grant are bound to renew their romance and remarry.

The Contra Gender Function (in the above cases it is specifically the Anima and the Animus) energizes a person's creativity. But in this film, it goes beyond the realm of psychology and has repercussions in sociology. The image of the internal feminine in men is often referred to in classical mythology as a muse, a ghostly female personage that whispers into a man's ear and brings about his creative envelopment. Because of our social history, women's creative acts have been both ignored and undervalued. Thus, they lack the same symbolization system that has been awarded men. It is only recently that women's creativity has been described with any detail. There are exceptions, but they are rare: Hildegard of Bingen, a scholar, composer, doctor, poet, and mystic, or St. Catherine of Sienna (1347-80), the scholar and mystic who described her religious/creative fits as the image of Jesus coming to her and piercing her heart with a burning spear. What Catherine describes in her wonderfully mystic poetry is clearly orgasm (or beyond).

Thus, *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* is one of the few works that accurately describes the creative act in women – the meeting with a fearful internal male image, making peace with it, using it in one's creativity, and finally falling in love with it.

Unfortunately, the situation is not quite this straightforward. True, Mrs. Muir's creation comes from her unconscious by way of the Ghost/Amimus figure. True, it seems reasonable that it is tainted with what we would popularly perceive as “masculine” elements – the sea, sexual adventures, conquest, and so on. However, I must point out that this may not be the only source of creation. We must be careful not to ascribe too much to the unconscious to the exclusion of the influence of the conscious mind or Ego. Creativity can also be strongly rooted in the conscious aspects of the psyche – though this is little discussed. My favorite example is Bing Crosby: an introvert who, by use of his voice and song, gently and lovingly invites us into his introversion, where we find ourselves most comfortable whether we be extroverts or introverts. Here, his introversion is a part of his conscious personality, at least judging from his films and personal appearances. With a little observation, I am sure you can describe many similar examples. Thus, we must reconsider the typical dictum that all creativity stems from the unconscious. While creativity may indeed originate in the unconscious, this raw material must be molded and shaped by the conscious mind. We must give credit where credit is due. This is conveyed in the film when Capt. Gregg allows Lucy to “change the grammar all you please but leave guts in it.”

When the book is completed, a single gesture sums up Lucy's psychological accomplishments. Walking from her room to the balcony, she seemingly absent-mindedly spins the telescope. Up until now, it has only been used to look at the sea, but now it can see in all directions equally – it has become the panopticon. Like Lucy's growing unconscious, it is able to view in many directions, to see all.

The second portion of the film now begins. Lucy goes to a publisher and successfully submits the manuscript. The publisher is literally fascinated with her work. Like any truly creative act, it tends to draw the reader (or viewer) out of the ordinary world into an alternate reality that often transcends both space and time. Here, the publisher reads the manuscript for three hours, leaving other authors waiting in the anteroom. True artistic communication is from unconscious to unconscious. And this, too, nourishes the soul.

In this moment of Lucy's joy and accomplishment, it must strike us as quite odd – especially from a symbolic point of view – that outside the publisher's office, it is raining. Rain is usually associated with sadness, yet the acceptance of the book is a very happy moment. What the rain predicts is the sadness to come, for while at the publishers, Mrs. Muir meets Mr. Miles Fairley. Handsome, assertive, and sophisticated, he is quite the opposite of Mr. Edwin Muir, the incompetent architect, and, presumably, lover.

What attracts Miles to Mrs. Muir is that under his cynical exterior there is another person: Uncle Neddy, the pseudonym he uses to write children's books. At this discovery, Mrs. Muir immediately melts her icy Victorian exterior and becomes effusive and

enthusiastic about him. This seems reasonable, for she assumes that she has found someone who has gone through the same experiences she has: Uncle Neddy is, she assumes, the door to Miles' unconscious in the same way that Capt. Gregg is to hers; Uncle Neddy is a manifestation of Miles' Animus. Or so she assumes.

Yet this is not to be. We can predict disaster from her new suitor's name: Miles Fairley. One way of reading this name is that he is miles from a fair lay (or lea – same word), or he is far from offering her a safe pasture. (The name Miles comes from the Greek for soldier – not a very attractive prospect for Lucy.) Lucy's attraction to Miles is immediately reflected in the lie she tells Miles about Uncle Neddy being her daughter's favorite author – he's not, as we shall find out shortly. This is, to our knowledge, the first lie Lucy has told in the film. And it is this lie that is the key to understanding Miles' role in her life. He is another part of her Shadow. If we recall that according to Jung, the shadow, among other things, consists of one's undeveloped potential – in this case the artistic output authored by the internal Capt. Gregg – and the evil nastiness that we tend to hide, even from ourselves. (This is similar to Freud's idea of the Id.) We have just witnessed the first eruption of this aspect of Lucy's Shadow – and it is in response to the appearance of this evil person, Miles Fairley. Thus, Miles is a negative aspect of Lucy's Shadow.

What Miles most activates in Lucy's Shadow is her vanity. When, at the train station, he steals her handkerchief as a souvenir, she is at first shocked. Then she smiles. She likes the attention that Miles pays her. This is her weak point, her Achilles' Heel. And by submitting to her vanity, perhaps we should say becoming a victim of it, she is about to explore another aspect of her unconscious, one that will, the film tells us, make her a whole and complete person when she is finally able to recognize and accept it.

Capt. Gregg tells her that she is about to make a fool of herself. Thus, her Animus knows what her conscious mind does not – that Miles is a cad. Despite all the connections she has made with her Animus in terms of creativity, she still doesn't trust it to run her everyday life. While this will cause her much pain and misery, it seems reasonable. We cannot just give up our common sense and allow our lives to be ruled by the unconscious – even, as in this case, it leads to error. Otherwise, our lives would have the syntax and coherence of dreams or fantasies. Thus, while Lucy does right to trust her conscious mind and disregard the advice of her Animus, she will have to pay the price for this retention of sanity – loneliness and rejection. Yet even this will have its benefit.

In the following scene, we finally see Lucy in the sea. Her daughter, Anna, assumes that she is in the cart used for changing clothes, and goes into it to look for her. When she finds it empty, she opens the sea-side door and we see Lucy, holding a thick rope, bathing. What we see is the symbolization of Lucy's psychological progress up to this point – she is comfortable in the world of the unconscious while still retaining a strong hold on the conscious mind, able to explore freely in the sea world while being able to regain a hold on the earth world whenever necessary. This scene acts like a symbolic psychological summary of the film up to this point. We can assume that it is

about to take a different course. And indeed, on her way home, radiant and at peace, she first encounters her kidnapped handkerchief and then Miles.

We understand, and even share, her attraction toward Miles: he is an accomplished painter, in addition to being a writer and an ardent lover. When he calls her, “Lucy,” she says that she hasn’t heard that name for such a long time. Like Capt. Gregg, he gives her back her name, in this case Lucy rather than Lucia. We then see the painting: Lucy bathing in the sea. He has honored and immortalized her psychological progress. No wonder both Lucy and we find Miles so attractive.

“Real happiness is worth almost any risk,” says Capt. Gregg, Lucy’s Animus. And adds, “Be careful.” Lucy admits that Capt. Gregg knows her own mind better than she does. Yet she goes against his good advice. And, as is appropriate for the unconscious, Gregg predicts, “there may be breakers ahead.” Lucy listens to his advice, more than most people would in similar circumstances – unless they, too, have met their “ghosts.” Yet, Lucy must continue her life in the real world, for better or for worse.

Suddenly Martha, their maid, becomes an active character. She, too, is suspicious of Miles. Martha, it now becomes clear, is another archetype projected from Lucy’s psyche – the Wise Old Woman. Martha’s intuitions about Miles are never justified in the plane of the physical world, yet they turn out to be completely correct. Lucy’s answer to Martha’s intuitive objections is that she must live in the real, physical world. A world in which she needs love. She has tried to be impervious to emotion, but her needs are swelling to the point of overflowing. Having grown so much – from the victim of society we saw at the beginning of the film to the self-assured and creative woman – perhaps her needs as a woman are now even more evident to her, impossible to repress, as demanded by the mores of the early twentieth century. Later, we will see the equivalency between Martha’s role and Gregg’s role in Lucy’s life: when Lucy tell Martha to put Gregg’s portrait in the attic, Martha, very quietly, says that she will put it in her own bedroom. Thus, is established the clear relation between the Animus as the masculine advisor and the Wise Old Woman as the female advisor. The synchronicity of Lucy’s growth is shown at the end of this sequence when Lucy looks at *two* paintings on the wall of her bedroom, one of Capt. Gregg and the other by Miles of her bathing. Here are the three milestones of her adventure: Capt. Gregg, the Animus; Lucy bathing, being at peace with the unconscious; and the author of that image of her peace, Miles, the Shadow.

Capt. Gregg leaves Lucy. He recognizes that though connection with the Animus is beneficial to a woman's psyche, over dependence, that is, becoming possessed by the Animus, is dangerous. Thus, he makes his farewells and places his presence where it belongs, in Lucy’s unconscious – she will remember him only as a dream. And he bids her a lover’s farewell.

At the pinnacle of her happiness, assured by Miles that she will not fall because of his support, she learns that Miles is married! It is clear now that Capt. Gregg is not a “real” ghost, but only a projection of Lucy’s unconscious. Were he “real,” he would have access to information she does not and could tell her that Miles is married. Yet,

surprisingly, this does not happen. While some may see this as a weakness in the plot, I see it as a validation of the need to see the film psychologically, not literally.

Now comes the toughest question in the film, “How does Mrs. Muir deal with the encounter with her Shadow?” After a good cry, we see her again walking on the beach, on the border between the symbolic conscious and unconscious. She returns accompanied by the family pet, thus we know that her instinct is with her. Thankfully, she has not lost what she worked so hard to achieve. It is the anniversary of her arrival in the house – she repeats almost exactly what happened on the first day: she sits in the chair to take a nap, looks at the dog, looks at the window where, a year ago, the ghost entered for the first time. This time, however, he is gone; his work has been done. Lucy has changed, grown. It is now time for her to live the rest of her life.

At this time, we are shown an interlude of many different stormy seas and waves crashing. And Lucy again walking the beach over the years, aging easily. Daughter Ann returns as an adult about to be married. The mark of Lucy’s psychological development now extends to all those around her: her daughter admits to a new life-long weakness for naval lieutenants while Martha says she prefers Captains! This is Lucy’s accomplishment: her own growth has infected those around her to their benefit, she is the donor of their well-being. With this, she needs no further accomplishments in the physical world, no lovers, no adventures. Her journey has been a totally internal one and now it has influenced the internal states of others to their betterment. What more could one ask of life?

The scope of what has been happening is now revealed. Both Anna and Lucy, daughter and mother, had the same “dreams” of Capt. Gregg. Clearly, we are dealing with a phenomenon of the Collective Unconscious. This is very hopeful for us, the viewers. For it means that there is a Capt. Gregg out there for each of us. All we have to do, like Lucy, is not run away in fear, and simply believe.

The Ghost and Mrs. Muir. Directed by Joseph L. Mankeiewicz, Written by Philip Dunne, based on the novel by R. A. Dick. Photography by Charles Lag (for which he received an Academy Award nomination). Music by Bernard Herrmann, Costumes by Oleg Cassini. Twentieth Century Fox Studios, 1947.