

Jung's Archetypes as Sources for Female Leadership¹

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"I shall never forget Her who is the giver of happiness;
She it is, O Mother, who, in the form of the Moon,
Creates the world full of sounds and their meanings,
And again, by Her power in the form of the Sun,
She it is who maintains the world.
And She, again, it is who, in the form of Fire,
destroys the whole universe at the end of the ages."²
—Tantric Hymn—

Carl Jung (1875-1961) distinguished himself from Sigmund Freud and most of their colleagues in that he recognized the existence and admitted the significance of the intangible elements of the psyche—what many previous thinkers, from Plato to the early Christian philosophers, have called spirit.³ His own spiritual views were complex, unorthodox, and remained open to fresh insights to the end of his long life. Jung recognized and valued those aspects of a person's whole being which were dismissed by modern positivistic science which recognizes only the material world and denies the existence of spirit.

The acceptance of the spiritual dimension allows us to understand character—the complex of beliefs, attributes, and virtues that "make the person"—as a spiritual trait. If we, in turn, understand leadership as a character trait, then it too, becomes amenable to spiritual understanding. Key to this understanding is Jung's concept of the archetype. According to Jung, "The concept of the archetype is derived from the repeated observation that, for instance, the myths and fairy-tales of world literature contain definite motifs which crop up everywhere. We meet these same motifs in the fantasies, dreams, deliria, and delusions of individuals living today."⁴

Thomas Moore and Douglas Gillette adapted and extended Jung's approach in their exploration of the male psyche by using the archetypes of the King, the Warrior, the Magician, and the Lover.⁵ These four archetypes serve as intuitive short-cuts into clusters of virtues and the specific ethos associated with each of them. More significantly, they serve as vehicles for both the understanding and the modeling of these traits in real persons, and, by extension, they serve as models for leadership. But Jung's theoretical framework of the human psyche is remarkably symmetrical; the extravert is balanced by the introvert; the objective material world by the inner world of feeling, the Ying by the Yang, and the masculine principle—the Animus—is balanced by the feminine principle, the Anima.⁶ Following Jung's idea of the complementarity of opposites, similar archetypes may be identified and used to provide a foundation for the understanding of the unique qualities that characterize the female psyche and serve as useful models for characteristically female ways of providing leadership.

Leadership is a complex of qualities that can be instantly recognized in the actions of others, but which elude easy categorization or analysis. Thus, despite its importance to social life, the exploration of the essential elements of leadership is an elusive task. Leadership, defined as the ability to motivate, to cause others to willingly follow, has often been viewed as a special, almost magical ability that some people have and others lack. This ability is what allows special persons to give direction and purpose to human groups.

In ancient times, “natural leaders,” i.e. those persons who possessed the ability to motivate and direct others, rose to positions of authority. When these positions became hereditary, they were not necessarily occupied by persons capable of meeting the demands of leadership. This has been a characteristic weakness of hereditary leadership systems ever since. To compensate for human inadequacy, some attempts have always been made to educate or train those destined or chosen for positions of leadership. As human cultures have become more complex social roles have followed suit. These roles have also tended to become differentiated by gender. Leadership roles in particular have become increasingly “gendered” to reflect these social realities.

Despite the presence of matriarchal systems, in most cultures, social and political power has been disproportionately exercised by males. Western culture, which evolved within a predominantly Christian context, has its religious sources in the Jewish-Semitic Middle East and the Greco-Roman political and philosophical traditions, both of which are distinctly patriarchal. This means that in the political, religious, and economic spheres the majority of leaders have been male. In those cases where women have been called upon to exercise leadership roles, they were expected to master “trans-gendered” roles and exercise male-like leadership. For example Queen Isabella of Castile was admiringly described by her contemporaries as a *mujer de ánimo varonil* (a woman of manly temper).⁷

Nonetheless, Western civilization has not been entirely dismissive of the female psychic energies. Other major civilizations, such as those that evolved in a predominantly Muslim

context, have been much more restrictive of female leadership and have arguably developed distinctive social pathologies precisely because of this.⁸ In contrast, many Native American societies, despite the predominance of the male Warrior archetype, have accepted and developed a complementary matriarchal social system and accepted and honored female leadership roles. Hindu and Buddhist cultures are also dominated by men in the political sphere but women's leadership roles in the family are highly regarded. Both of these cultural complexes afford surprisingly equal value to female "Beingness"—a specifically female sense of self-perception. The powerful symbolism of sexual complementarity afforded by the Chinese Ying-Yang icon, and the uninhibited creative sexuality of many Hindu goddesses, show honor and respect for feminine energy in these cultures.

The four female archetypes of the Faerie, the Wise One, the Lover, and the Queen are found in most cultures and provide insights into female patterns of leadership. As is the case with her male counterpart, the King, the Queen is the most complex and mature of the female archetypes. This is because the image of a Queen who serves as a center for the mature ordering of things includes and transcends the other archetypes of the Feminine. Indeed the most powerful embodiment of this archetype is the Great Goddess—The Great Mother. This cosmic image is the equal to that of an all powerful God, the source of complete cosmic power, but at the same time is more accessible, less menacing. Images that may point to such a Great Mother, a supernatural Queen, are among some of the earliest human depictions of a higher power.

On a human scale, a powerful woman who is entirely confident in herself and is capable of serving as role model would necessarily reflect on a more modest scale the attributes of the Queen. Ideally, all women in "leadership positions" would also, to a greater or lesser degree, embody the ideal Queen. For example, the mother of a family would model the Queen for her family. In those rare cases where women become leaders of nations, not because they are the consort to a king, but in their own right, the archetypal Queen may take visible form. Notable examples in the West include Isabella of Castile who became *reina en propiedad* (queen in her own right) at the age of eighteen and is still revered as one of the greatest leaders of her nation, Elizabeth I of England "the Virgin Queen" who gave her name to an entire period of her country's history and Victoria—the Empress-Queen who came to embody the virtues and greatness of the world-wide British Empire. Modern examples include Margaret Thatcher who, in a parliamentary democracy, continued in the footsteps of her distinguished predecessors. As is true of her male counterpart, the Queen is the symbol for the leader of a nation, but the archetype itself, symbolizes leadership on a much grander, cosmic scale. However, all the essential attributes of the archetype of the Queen are present in a real woman who plays that role, regardless of the scope her real responsibilities—be she queen of a nation, a clan, or her own family.

Since the archetype of the Queen is the richest, most mature form of the Feminine, it cannot arrive at the pinnacle of life-enhancing majesty without first participating in the attributes of other important feminine archetypes. Just as the King is not born as a King, but must start life as a Prince, the Queen begins life as a Princess. The Princess is called

to evolve to the fullness of her potential and must earn her Queenship through a path that necessarily involves trials and suffering as the way to experience and maturity.

If the Prince must normally develop through the path of the Warrior, the Princess develops through that of the Faerie. This is the one archetype that is distinctly different for male and female development. Just as the Warrior is the most natural complement to the King and embodies a set of virtues that are necessary to Kingship, the Faerie is the most natural first step on the road to Queenship. The explosive centrifugal energy of the male Warrior archetype is balanced in the cosmic order of things by the attractive, centrifugal energy of the female Faerie archetype. The Faerie is not just a Princess, she is the symbol of all that is fair, all that is beautiful, all that transcends material existence. These concepts are not merely ornamental niceties but are at the very center of Being. Indeed, in their mythological thinking, the Ancient Greeks recognized the importance of the Faerie in their concept of the Nine Muses—each the inspiration and source of such humane gifts as poetry, music, and history.⁹ In their philosophical thinking, the Greeks recognized Beauty is an essential attribute of the Absolute Good.¹⁰ The Faeries' virtues are intangible and ethereal; they can at times be self-sacrificial too. In some forms the Faerie clearly complements the Warrior. The Nordic Valkyries, those stout maidens who took worthy fallen warriors to Valhalla also served as sources of inspiration for heroic action.¹¹

Just as the Warrior appears most fully when he gives himself over to death in an act of self-denial, the Faerie appears most fully when she denies herself all intercourse with men. This is the source of her power. She places herself outside any man's power; thus, she has the power to inspire, to attract. Consider the real-life women who have embodied the Faerie—Joan of Arc, known as *La Pucelle* (The Maid), Elizabeth I “The Faerie Queen,” the Legendary St. Barbara—who is invoked as the Patroness of artillerymen in many armies throughout the world—St. Cecilia—the Christian embodiment of Musica; all eschewed conventional attachment to men. Indeed, the legions of Virgin-Martyrs venerated by the early Church attest to the power of the self-sacrificial, inspirational but unreachable Faerie. She is the archetype behind the idea of *fin'amors*—the courtly love of the troubadours. Her figure is the *Belle Dame sans Merci*, the intangible Lady of the Lake, and Petrarch's Laura.¹² Joan of Arc, who like a Valkyrie takes up the arms and armor of a Warrior, is also a Faerie—inspiring many warriors to heroic feats and an entire country to seek freedom. Her words demonstrate the power for active leadership generated by the Faerie archetype: “Go bravely; all will be well. Have no fear. We shall find none who can harm us; indeed, we shall meet with no resistance. I have no fear for lack of men. There will be many to follow me.”¹³

Another alternative in the path to Queenship leads through the archetype of the Wise One. If the Faerie inhabits ethereal regions where all appears as bright and luminous, the Wise One inhabits the shadows. She is at home near the earth, even inside the earth, inside the dark, moist, primordial womb, the source of all fertility. The Wise One is no longer young. She is mature, rooted. She is likely to be old and she is a Mother, or more likely, a Grand-Mother. In contrast to the Faerie, she has once been a companion to the male, she may have even loved a male, but she has now transcended all that and has

reached a state of superior wisdom. In contrast also to her male counterpart—the Magician—her subtle mind seeks not to penetrate beneath the surface of things and probe the mysteries of nature, rather, she looks inward into the mysteries of Being. This earthly knowledge extends to the body and more specifically to the very distinct realities of the female body, with its mysteries of fertility and procreation.

Women who knew this much were much respected. They carved out a distinct sphere of knowledge, distinctively feminine, hermetic to the male. Taboos, arose around this type of knowledge. This is the knowledge of the Sybil, of the Oracle of Delphi, of the forest spirits. In later centuries, patriarchal institutions resented and persecuted this source of feminine power because it lay out of their control and it dealt with many topics which were not well understood and stigmatized because of their inherent feminine nature. Many Wise Women were accused of being “witches” and were cruelly tortured and put to death. Other societies that practiced the subjugation of women, primarily in the Islamic culture, also dishonored the Wise One and rejected her knowledge—and in doing so, impoverished themselves immeasurably.

It is natural for the Wise One to seek separation from her sisters who toil in the world. Their quest for special knowledge requires long hours of solitude for study and reflection. Most often, the Wise One becomes a seer, an advisor.¹⁴ But in some cases, the Wise One may rise to be a Queen. She may then combine the attributes of the Queen and the Wise One, becoming the Wise-Queen. Historically, The Queen of Sheba, the counterpart to Solomon—the Magician King—illustrates this type of leadership.¹⁵ According to the Biblical narrative the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon as an equal, for she “...traveled to Jerusalem to test him with difficult questions.”¹⁶ Then, “When she and Solomon met, she asked him all the questions that she could think of. He answered them all, there was nothing too difficult to him to explain.” Satisfied: “She presented the gifts she had brought and returned to the land of Sheba.” In the Story of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba the Wise-Queen meets the Magician-King and she is satisfied. Notice how the Queen of Sheba—the Wise One—does not fall in love even with Solomon—the Magician-King. She is beyond easy infatuation; she is whole within herself, secure in her arcane wisdom.

The metamorphosis from Faerie to Queen is illustrated by another well-known example from Biblical narrative—the story of Esther. Having agreed to present herself to the Xerxes, King of Persia, as a possible mate for the sake of her people, she is selected to be the new Queen. Since she does not marry for love, but rather out of duty, she is free of passionate attachment and partakes of the Faerie, but in accepting the responsibilities of her position as she matures, she becomes a Wise One and reigns in wisdom over an entire nation.¹⁷

Perhaps the most powerful and inspiring embodiment of the archetype of the Wise One is the mystical Figure of Sophia—Wisdom. The rise of Sophia as the symbol for Divine Wisdom may represent the reassertion of the Goddess archetype into the Jewish and later the Christian traditions. As a powerful archetype, the Goddess cannot be denied. She intrudes into a patriarchal monotheism first as the image of an essential quality of the

God-Head in the Jewish tradition and then as the “feminine” aspect of God in the Christian Trinitarian conception of the Holy Spirit. The divine authority of Sophia is proclaimed in a metaphor from the *Book of Proverbs*.

Listen! Wisdom is calling out.
Reason is making herself heard.
At the entrance to the city,
beside the gates, she calls:
“I appeal to all of you;
I call to everyone on earth.
Are you immature? Learn to be mature.
Are you foolish? Learn to have sense.
Listen to my excellent words;
all I tell you is right.
What I say is the truth;
lies are hateful to me.
Everything I say is true;
nothing is false or misleading.
To those with insight, it is all clear.
To the well-informed, it is all plain.
Choose my instruction instead of silver;
choose my knowledge rather than the finest gold.
I am Wisdom, I am better than jewels;
nothing you want can compare with me.
I am Wisdom, and I have insight;
I have knowledge and sound judgment.”¹⁸

The fourth archetype of the mature feminine is the Lover. Even more that in the case of its male twin, the female Lover archetype poses a problem when taken in the context of leadership. The Lover embodies the unrestrained embrace of the life-force, of Eros, or in this case, of Aphrodite, of pleasure, of life itself. It is a life-affirming and creative archetype but one that eschews order, sacrifice, and rational knowledge. It is not easily reconciled with the orderly world of the Queen and its concept of *noblesse oblige* or inborn sense of duty, and is the polar opposite of the virginal Faerie. It is suspicious of the knowledge of the Wise One, because she has transcended this phase.¹⁹ And it also is dependent on the other—the Lover seeks to empty herself out and merge or become the Beloved. Could we then conclude that there is no place for the Lover in the spiritual makeup of the female leader? Given the importance of all archetypes to a mature and balanced human existence it would be wise to reconsider the paradoxical relationship of the Lover to the other archetypes. Can there be a Lover-Queen? Is the Lover an element of Queenship? The profusion of mythological images from widely different traditions point to possible answers.

The powerful Ishtar/Astarte/Aphrodite/Venus mythological complex is a strong archetypal current that runs deep from the appropriately named Fertile Crescent through the foundations of Near Eastern and Western Civilizations. India has equally powerful

images of female generative power in Shakti, and her three *avatars* or embodiments of Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Parvati. The Chinese Ying-Yang symbol represents in graphic form the classic Jungian *mysterium conjunctionem*. Thus, the Lover intrudes powerfully into humanity's collective consciousness. If a leader is enthusiastic, connects with her followers and is capable of inspiring them to accomplish the difficult deeds, she is partaking of the energy made available by the Lover archetype.

The intoxication of love opens an alternate reality with its own truths which separates those in the grip of the Lover from mundane concerns. This power is evident in the song of the Hindu poet Mirabai to Krishna—her Dark Beloved.

Binding my ankles with silver
I danced—
people in town called me crazy,
She'll ruin the clan,
said my mother-in-law,
and the prince
had a cup of venom delivered.
I laughed as I drank it.
Can't they see?—
body and mind aren't something to lose,
the Dark One's already seized them,
Mira's Lord can lift mountains,
He is her refuge.²⁰

Thus, as is the case with the male Lover, the female Lover gains enormous powers of transcendence but she, and he, are subjected to “the other” and therefore lack the freedom of the other archetypes. This is the power and limitation of the *hierosgamos*—the cosmic marriage of opposites.²¹ It is equally apparent that the other virtues resident in the Faerie and the Wise One need to rein-in the Lover's “oceanic” exuberance and desire to transcend all limits in order to allow her energy its life-giving role without creating chaos in the realm. But, in a different sense, if the Lover recognizes the One worthy of her love and subjects herself completely to Him, the results can be amazing. This is the power and example of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. When asked how she has mustered the strength to devote her entire life to caring for “the poorest of the poor” she answers: “Without him [Jesus] we could not continue doing it for a whole lifetime. One year, two years, perhaps; but not during a whole life, without thought of reward, without expectation of anything good except to suffer with him who loved us so much that he gave his life for us. Without Jesus our life would be meaningless, incomprehensible; Jesus explains our life.”²²

When Lover combines with Faerie, the result can be a Joan of Arc whose last recorded words before she was burnt at the stake were: “I pray you, go to the nearest church, and bring me the cross, and hold it up level with my eyes until I am dead. I would have the cross on which God hung be ever before my eyes while life lasts in me. Jesus, Jesus!”²³ It

appears that the Lover is as essential to good Queenship as it is to mature Kingship. It is another valid and fertile archetype for female leadership after all.

What can we learn from the examination of the archetypes of the mature feminine as they relate to leadership? First, female leaders, in order to fulfill their function properly, would do well to embody the best qualities represented by at least one of the archetypes of the mature feminine. When women do this, they model these archetypes for their followers and their example inspires them on the path of virtue. The archetypes are viable because they furnish us with a short-cut, an intuitive way to grasp the essence of a group of attributes that connects directly with the unconscious mind. Instead of patient intellectual analysis of each individual attribute of leadership, the ethos of each archetype is immediately accessible through a complex of cultural resonances which are instantly recognized by others. These archetypes are emotional and spiritual pictures that have an immediate effect on individuals and groups.²⁴ This effect is readily apparent when one compares the phrase “The Good Queen” with “a queen who is good, generous, noble, etc.” The first phrase is incomparably richer in context and seems “alive” compared to a listing of adjectives to describe a particular queen. It evokes an instant, almost visual, image that has an immediate appeal. This may be why the epic epithets in the old Greek and Norse epics so moved their listeners.²⁵

Archetypes are, by their very nature, universal and indestructible. The complementarity of opposites assures us that, even in patriarchal cultures that are hostile to the feminine, feminine archetypes cannot forever be suppressed. Archetypes are not irrational forms of thought; rather they are supra-rational, beyond the parameters of logical thought and if we accept the idea of the “collective unconscious” as an image for the deep cultural substratum common to humanity, they are universally present—hence their power to move, to affect, to influence. Suppression of an archetype only results in denial of attributes and spiritual resources that we, as humans, need. Therefore, the female leader will, of necessity, model in various proportions the attributes inherent in the four archetypes of the mature feminine. Of these, the Queen is the leader *par excellence*. But the Queen must encompass other qualities as well. The road to Queenship takes an aspiring leader through the path of the Faerie and/or the Wise One. These two in turn remain puerile or sterile without the life-affirming attributes of the Lover. Thus, if we reflect on the archetypes of the mature feminine they offer aspiring women leaders models that may serve as sources of strength to help them protect, guide, and inspire their followers.

Notes and References

¹ This article expands the concepts explored in “Leadership and the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine” and applies them to the other half of humanity—women. In doing so, we apply the same principles, not in a mechanistic way, but in the spirit of Jungian complementarity, which occurs at the meeting of opposites—the *conjunctio oppositorum*. In other words, these archetypes and the leadership traits that they represent are not

necessarily mirror-images of the male archetypes, but are of equal value and complement them in a profound way.

² Tantric hymn to the Goddess Shakti. John Woodroffe, aka Arthur Avalon, ed., *Hymns to the Goddess*, (London: Luzac, 1913), rep. ed. Forgotten Books, 2008, p. 17. Accessed at www.forgottenbooks.org.

³ "... Freud's attitude to the spirit seemed to me highly questionable. Wherever, in a person or in a work of art, an expression of spirituality (in the intellectual, not in the supernatural sense) came to light, he suspected it, and insinuated that it was repressed sexuality. [...] When we speak only of the outside—and that is what Freud did—we are considering only half of the whole ..." Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. by Aniela Jaffé trans. by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), pp. 149 and 152.

⁴ Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 392.

⁵ Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover, Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine*, (San Francisco: Harper, 1991).

⁶ The idea of the Ying-Yang duality permeates Chinese thought. In the Yellow Emperor's *Classic of Medicine*, a treatise written in the 3rd Century B.C., this principle is used to explain health and disease. "The Yellow Emperor said: 'The principle of Yin and Yang is the foundation of the entire universe. It underlies everything in creation. It brings about the development of parenthood; it is the root and source of life and death. It is found with the temples of the gods.'" Patricia Buckley Ebrey, ed., *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, (New York: The Free Press, 1993), p. 77.

⁷ For example, the Franciscan Friar and poet Íñigo de Mendoza described Isabella in these terms:

"Oh exalted manly fame/ of such wonderful Lady/ that being of the feminine state/ combined such

manly strength/ with virtuous prudence." Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, "Isabel la Católica vista por sus contemporáneos," *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes* <http://www.alcudiavirtual.ua.es/servlet/SirveObras/public/23589512102325074554679/>.

⁸ "Parents and other authority figures imbue the Arab child with the notion of the sinfulness of sex, and the culture as a whole surrounds the individual with an atmosphere which constantly reminds him of the same subject. The segregation of the sexes, the veiling of the women where it is practiced, and all the other minute rules that govern and restrict contact between men and women, have the effect of making sex a prime mental preoccupation in the Arab world. The very taboo of sex creates a kind of fixation on the subject." Rafael, Patai, *The Arab Mind*, (New York: Hatherleigh Press, 2002), p. 126.

⁹ Originally the Muses were goddesses of springs. They then became patronesses of memory, poetic inspiration, and various arts. At first there were only three Muses, but their number was later fixed at nine.

New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology, s.v. "Greek Mythology" by F Guirand, p. 118.

¹⁰ "...Plato wanders among so many conceptions, among which it is just possible to say that the identification of the Beautiful with the Good prevails." Benedetto Croce as quoted in Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1985), p. 256.

¹¹ New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology, s.v. "Teutonic Mythology," by E. Tonnelat, pp. 278-279.

¹² Bernard O'Donoghue, provides a good anthology of courtly love literature in *The Courtly Love Tradition*, (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1982).

¹³ Willard Trask, ed., *Joan of Arc in her own Words*, (New York: Turtle Point Press), 1996, p. 51.

¹⁴ Moore and Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover*, pp. 100-101.

¹⁵ 1 Kings 10: 1-13 and 2 Chronicles 9: 1-12.

¹⁶ 2 Chronicles 9:1.

¹⁷ Esther 2:17-18.

¹⁸ Proverbs 8:1-12.

¹⁹ "The Lover energy is thus utterly opposed—at least at first glance—to the other energies of the mature masculine." His interests are the opposite of the Warrior's, the Magician's, and the King's concerns for boundaries, containment, order, discipline." Moore and Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover*, p. 126.

²⁰ Mirabai, *For Love of the Dark One: Songs of Mirabai*, translated by Andrew Schelling (Boston: Shambala, 1993), p. 37.

²¹ Hierogamos. Sacred or spiritual marriage, union of archetypal figures in the rebirth mysteries of antiquity and also in alchemy. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 395.

²² Edward Le Joly, *Mother Teresa of Calcutta*, (San Francisco: Harper Row), 1983, p. 6.

²³ Trask, ed., *Joan of Arc in her Own Words*, p. 144.

²⁴ “The concept of the archetype ... is derived from the repeated observation that, for instance, the myths and fairytales of world literature contain definite motifs which crop up everywhere.” Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 392.

²⁵ To Homer the nymph Thetis is always, “silver-footed” or “lovely-haired;” Athene is “bright-eyed,” and Aphrodite is “Golden Aphrodite” or “Smiling Goddess.” V.J. Howe, “Epithets in Homer,” <http://www.angelfire.com/art/architecture/articles/008.htm>.