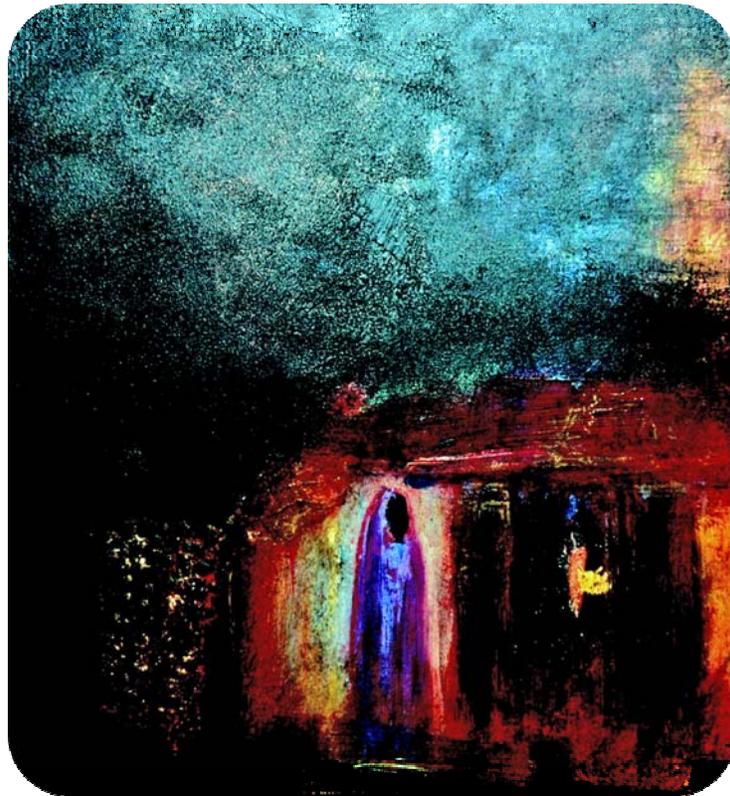


Archetypes of the Sacred Feminine



Sheila Foster

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To
Divine Mother
My Daughter, Heather
Sophie
and to
the Holy Fire

Acknowledgements

My deep gratitude

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Dear Reader,

Archetypes of the Sacred Feminine is only a portion of the whole book. In this free download, I have only included the chapter *Sacred Feminine Initiation*, and a chapter on each of the five archetypes. The Table of Contents below reflects the entire book called, *Sacred Feminine Initiation: An Archetypal Journey*. The Introduction will tell you what is in the other chapters. If you like what you read here and want the entire book, you can download the full version of *Sacred Feminine Initiation: An Archetypal Journey* for \$10.00.

Table of Contents

Introduction	
Prologue: You Must Carry the Fire and Not Get Burned...2	
Looking for My Face.....	11
Shadow and Longing.....	16
Invocation of Archetypes.....	19
Sacred Feminine Initiation.....	23
A Map of the Territory.....	28
The Archetypes of the Sacred Feminine.....	31
The Mother.....	32
The Amazon.....	35
The Lover.....	39
The Medial.....	44
The Queen.....	49
Archetypal Self Inquiry.....	53

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Introduction

This little book is an invitation to dip your toe into the deep ocean of Sacred Feminine Initiation and conscious femininity. It carries words that can only point to that which I want to share most about Sacred Feminine initiation, the archetypal journey, and the Great Mystery. It is all so beyond words, and perhaps you will feel the transmission of feminine energies as you read. This is intended to be a small taste of *Sacred Feminine Initiation: An Archetypal Journey*. There is much to write about and this is the first fruit to go forth.

This body of work has been emerging and evolving since 1980. It is not meant to be all-encompassing or comprehensive, yet I hope that it will touch your heart somehow, quicken your longing, and inspire you to invoke the Sacred Feminine, whether you know Her or not. We are living in times when the conscious feminine principle of relatedness is desperately needed in our own lives and on the planet. All women are vessels for the Sacred Feminine. All women are healers, priestesses, and ritual makers—whether we realize this consciously, or not. It is time to acknowledge who we are and what we are here for, and step forth. Sacred Feminine initiation can help you do that. I suggest that you read this material casually, take it into your heart, and trust your being to cull out what is important for you.

It is impossible to say that our spiritual awakening begins at any one point in our lives. I have had spiritual experiences since I was two years old and felt the longing for the Mystery for as long as I can remember. So I start with a Prologue, *You Must Carry the Fire and Not Get Burned*, which is about a period of time in my life when everything went up in flames, including me. My own intense Sacred Feminine initiation erupted with fire, death, kundalini awakening, healing, synchronicities, and an amazing interweave of archetypal dreams, ritual, and actual events.

Looking for My Face, is about my spiritual seeking as a child, longing, and my introduction to Carl Jung's work and Toni Wolff's model of women's personality types based on four core archetype of Feminine: the Mother, the Amazon, the Lover/Hetaira, and the Medial. *Shadow and Longing*, addresses how these archetypal energies fall into shadow when we are children, and our longing is our homing instinct to go toward the Mystery, calling us to reunite us with these lost, unloved parts of our own soul. Each one hidden in the shadows has the face of a child and carries immense creative potential. In *Invocation of Archetypes*, I share how I discovered that archetypal energies can be invoked for healing and initiation, and how that was central to the emergence of the women's mystery school and the beginning of the Sacred Feminine initiation groups.

Sacred Feminine Initiation, offers one of my archetypal dreams that so beautifully illustrates the process of initiation and what the outcomes are for a woman and her life. *A Mythic Map of the Territory*, discusses the archetypal pattern of the initiatory journey, its

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similarity to shamanic initiation and the hero's journey, and how we can use this as a map for travelling the initiatory territory. The last five chapters offer descriptions of the Mother, the Amazon, the Lover, the Medial, and the Queen. Each chapter describes the archetype in both its bright and shadow expressions, some of the inner work required as well as the gifts and teachings called forth through initiation. I also discuss briefly how each archetype relates to men.

While these archetypes are described as separate energies, discreet from each other, they are, in fact, inter-mingling all the time within each of us. Like having a Council of Wise Women within, the archetypes can serve and support each other with their own unique 'specialties' in a woman. By calling them out of shadow we can become healed, whole, and empowered as women, or if they continue in shadow, they can run or ruin our lives by remaining unconscious and undeveloped. Jung wrote that what we do not bring to consciousness becomes our fate. This is a daunting thought. There is great joy in welcoming home those aspects of our own soul that went underground or never emerged at all, and an even greater joy in feeling whole, empowered, and free to live our lives with our hearts wide open, knowing that we are the Mystery.

By reading about and contemplating each archetype, invoking that energy in you as you read, you can get a sense of which one or two are your strengths and working well for you, and as well as which ones are your shadow archetypes, yet to be developed. It is in our shadow that the hidden treasures lie.

Archeypal Self Inquiry, offers an inventory check list for self discovery of the bright and shadow aspects of the Mother, the Amazon, the Lover, and the Medial archetypes. It can help you assess where your strengths lie, and which archetypal domains are inviting the inner work for healing and awakening.

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Sacred Feminine Initiation

Sacred Feminine initiation brings a radical opening into new levels of consciousness, a new way of being with self and the world. We are profoundly changed by each initiatory experience at all levels of our being. We also acquire new knowledge, direct experience and understandings, skills, empowerments, and often, new assignments in the world. Sacred Feminine initiation is not unlike initiations that indigenous shamans, medicine women, and holy people go through. While our ordinary life brings the initiatory events to each of us, in the Temple of the Sacred Feminine we support women going through initiation with ritual, spiritual practices, and new skills for meeting the gatekeepers and the challenges, and making the passage through the unknown realms of initiation.

Initiation is a highly creative process and, by definition, that means it requires the breaking up of old forms. Something has to be deconstructed in order for some new creation to appear. Our old ways of thinking, feeling, and being are forever changed. The psychological structures that have kept us where we were dissolve or break apart. We feel ourselves to be in breakdown mode, and at the same time a breakthrough is happening into new ways of perceiving, being, and living with much more awareness, *as awareness*. The structures of our old conditioning are broken apart to give birth to this newborn dimension of being that has been hidden deep in the dank cellars of our being for so very long, lifetimes perhaps. The old identity structures—who we *think* we are—break apart somehow in the dying/birthing process.

Sacred Feminine Initiation is the Mystery unfolding as each woman. We can't know what the Mystery is, and words can only point to it. We can experience it directly, yet anything we say about it isn't it. Initiation is a deep, intimate encounter and conversation with the Mystery, and for each woman it is a unique experience. At the same time, there are archetypal patterns to the events and structure of the journey that are common to all of our initiations. Because words can never say what it is, and we diminish it in trying to name it, this may why there has always been so much secrecy about initiation rites. We can speak of events and happenings, but that does not even come close to expressing what occurs. Dreams and art that emerge from experiences of initiation, and some writing, also, come close, and can be portals to the direct experience that has no words.

I had the following dream in the very early days of my investigation of the Feminine while I was in Jungian analysis. I was aching for some connection to, or understanding of, the Feminine, even though I really did not know what it was I was asking for. I felt a longing that I could not ignore. I had felt this longing all of my life, and thought at different times it was for this or that, but nothing ever met or fulfilled this longing in me. At that time, the way I knew how to seek the source or the 'cure' for this longing was to go after it intellectually, through my dreams, and by sharing what I was learning with other women.

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Here is my dream:

My young son, Tim, five years old, led me to a cave. We went in, but soon he disappeared and I was walking deep into the damp darkness alone. I could see clearly despite the absence of any light. As the cave wound around like a dark labyrinth, I came upon corpses, skeletons, decomposing bodies and half-dead people chained to the walls of the cave. The stench of decay and the sounds they were making were so horrible that I ran as fast as I could, deeper into the cave. It never occurred to me to turn and run back out the way I came in.

I ran and ran, finally got past the charnel grounds, and came upon a niche in the cave wall. The eye-level niche held a small shrine. I immediately noticed a significant shift in the energy around this shrine and I stopped feeling afraid and became curious. I suddenly felt peaceful. The shrine seemed so startlingly incongruent and odd after the horror of what I had just seen. There was a statue of the Madonna in the niche, and she was emanating a soft light from within. She wasn't more than a foot high and looked like so many statues of the Blessed Mother, standing there with her arms and hands extended out from her body, palms open and up, in a gesture of giving, receiving, welcoming. I felt her posture to be one of blessing and welcome.

There were a number of small, flickering, candles in the recesses of the stone walls around Her. Obviously others had travelled this way before me and lit the devotional candles. When I saw her, I re-membered and felt in my body and heart my long-forgotten childhood love of the Blessed Mother Mary. I had forgotten about her as I moved from teens into my twenties. A wave of recognition, humility, and gratitude swept through me, and I fell to my knees before her.

This was another one of those dreams that holds significance on both a personal and a collective level, as it re-awakened something that had been important and deep within me my whole life. As a collective dream, it offered a message for other women, as well. The Madonna had primal significance to me, as this was the form in which I first experienced the Divine Feminine as a child. Until I was in my early thirties, when my own initiations began, I didn't know that there were other goddesses or times before patriarchy and the ruling father god(s), when many people around the world worshipped the Great Mother Goddess. Greek and Roman mythology was as far back as I knew and even then, I just thought they were stories, myths. I didn't understand the significance until I got into Jung and read about archetypes and the collective unconscious.

My dream shows that we are led by our innate innocence, the sweet inner masculine, as represented by my five-year-old son leading me into the dark opening of the cave. The image of going into a dark cave is so feminine—it is like going back to the womb, through the vagina, to the source from which we came. The cave is also symbolic of the tomb, as it was for those poor souls in my dream. In initiation, we often cannot tell if we are in the womb or the tomb, and then

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discover that they are the same. The recognition and holding of this paradox brings us to the transcendent, the shrine within our own center. The presence of my boy child also shows the importance and the preciousness of the young, innocent, unconditioned masculine energy within us. The bright inner masculine, the animus, is an essential guide and helper on a woman's initiatory journey. His function is to point the way, shine the light so that we can see where to step next.

Women need to make friends with this inner masculine energy along the way, restore it to health and innocence if it has been corrupted by personal and collective conditioning, and cultivate it to its maturity. Eventually we partner with him in an inner sacred marriage. This happens in time as we follow the path of the Sacred Feminine. Our longing comes from our innocence. It is a reliable guide from the Mystery which provides the energy and the light that is needed to journey into the dark cave of the unknown seeking something we cannot really name. Longing keeps us moving forward, going deeper inward, even when we are scared to death of the skeletons of our past and the horrors of the shadows that abide within us.

In my dream, this little-boy attitude of curiosity and adventure led me to the cave. I had no fear, initially, so I followed him with an eagerness and excitement to explore the unknown. You will discover for yourself that this journey of Sacred Feminine initiation takes each of us into both the womb and the tomb, through birth and through death, feeling them to be the same at times, and then to re-birth and a new, awakened life.

Again and again, we encounter our own shadow—the corpses, skeletons and half-dead ones who are the unhealed, unloved, unknown, parts of ourselves. As we go, we become well-acquainted with our own fear and primal terror in all of its appearances and embodied sensations. With guidance, we can learn skillful means, practices and ways to meet it, moment to moment, and even embrace it. As we meet and welcome our shadow—what has long been hidden, not only in us, but also in our ancestral lineage—we become more of who we are meant to be, who we truly are. Much healing happens, soul retrieval occurs, ancestral healing happens, we discover our deepest gifts and creative energies that we could not have imagined are released. We are empowered to step into the world to give forth that which we are here to contribute, as well as receive. We grow into clear seeing, compassion, mercy, and wisdom.

Invocation of Sacred Feminine initiation transforms us and initiates us into new dimensions of consciousness, esoteric and practical human knowledge, skills for negotiating the inner and outer worlds, and ways of being with whatever our one precious human Life brings to us. Whether it is the holy or the horrible, we learn how to welcome it, open to directly experience it, no matter how painful or frightening it appears. We integrate what has been exiled for some reason in the past. This can be scary and challenging, and it requires great willingness, courage, and commitment, as well as an elder or guide, a support system and a holding vessel for this deep journey inward. Like giving birth to a beautiful child—which is what initiation

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offers—we forget the pain and feel that every contraction was well worth the Holy Child we now hold to our hearts. When we fully face our shadow, there is always a dear, little, lost child found among the bones and the wreckage.

While we are guided and propelled by something mysterious within us that is luminous and sees through the darkness, initiation is a solo adventure, like birth and death are, though we need not take this journey in solitude. Grace is always present, walking silently, invisibly with us, ready with her medicine when we need her help. She can appear in any form, way beyond any ideas we may have about what is possible. We become more authentic and awake, nothing more, nothing less. Initiation doesn't give us anything. It takes away the masks and the false identities that have hidden our authentic nature. Ultimately, what we may have thought or felt that we have given up or lost, isn't lost at all. It has been transformed or transmuted, composted into more authenticity.

Paradoxically, opening wide to the breaking open of our hearts is the portal into realms of spirit and beauty beyond imagining. When we engage the mythical dimension of our lives, we open ourselves to all kinds of extraordinary experiences in ordinary life. We enter into the conscious feminine, non-linear way of living in *kairos*—timeless feminine time—where an hour can feel like a minute and a minute can be a lifetime. We make the paradigm shift from living in our heads and doing our lives from there, to living in our hearts and simply being, knowing that it is not 'I' who controls this life. We come to find out that there is really no do-er, there never was. It was all a case of mistaken identity.

This is our *entelechy*—from the Greek *entelecheia*, meaning to have a goal. *Entelechy* refers to an actuality rather than a potentiality. It is the *entelechy* of a human being to become conscious, awake to our own essence as pure awareness in a human body. The current times are propelling us as a collective toward this like never before. We have front row seats if we are willing to take them. We are what we are, whether we are awake to it or not, and it is a much richer experience and more fun if we are awake to it all. The good news is that we don't have to figure out how to do it. It is already encoded within us, just as each seed is encoded to be a rose or an apple tree. The bud that you are is opening into what it already is, regardless of what your mind thinks, judges, or imagines.

In the Temple of the Sacred Feminine, spiritual practices and healing processes are taught so that we have many tools, skillful means, and conscious companionship to make this passage with eyes and heart as wide open as possible. What is needed always appears right on time—in *kairos* time, feminine time, not when our egoic mind thinks it is time. Having ritual elders to midwife our process and a loving, conscious community in which to be held, strengthen and fortify us for the journey, empowering us for some things that we could never do alone. Sometimes it seem so utterly miraculous, yet it isn't a miracle—it is how it really is and we come

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to see more of this as we grow in awareness. Wonder, awe, and amazement become regular companions on this initiatory journey. Gratitude is the ongoing mantra and prayer.

You can see and hear women from the Temple of the Sacred Feminine community speak about their own initiatory experiences, and learn more about the stages of the journey, in our *evocumentary* film, *Eve's Fire* at www.dangerousoldwomen.com .

It is extremely helpful and comforting to know that there is a pattern, a structure to this journey which sometimes feels totally chaotic and wild.

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The Mother Archetype: Bright and Shadow Potentials

The Mother archetype is the matrix of a woman's natural capacity and numinous power to conceive, birth, sustain, and renew life—whether it is a child, a project, a garden, or an idea—as well as give death when that is necessary. This archetype holds the pattern of our emergence from formlessness into form, and then back into the formless. All women express this archetype in one way or another, whether or not they ever conceive and birth a child. Like all archetypes, the Mother can appear as both bright and shadow. The Dark Mother is not bad or evil, she is the Mother energy associated with death—actual physical death, symbolic or initiatory death—and the underworld journey. The Hindu goddess Kali embodies the Dark Mother, whose destruction is in service to awakening consciousness. She is the Grand Initiatrix, the one who guides us into the unknown where we are initiated, where death is given to what no longer works in our lives, and old conditioning within us that does not serve consciousness dissolves. The energy freed by death at any level is transmuted into creative potential. It is her energetic presence that initiates us into the sacred rituals of sacrifice (from the Latin, *to make sacred*) and surrender.

The Great Mother archetype is represented by the cycles of seasons and the moon, as well as the cycles of a woman's life from conception, birth, sustenance, death, decay, and renewal. She is the full embodiment of the mystery of Life. The Mother presides over women's "blood mysteries": menstruation, pregnancy, and the transformation of blood into milk. Menopause, the holding of the blood, is yet another mystery that thins the veil between the worlds in women as they age and move toward the mystery of being a Crone and physical death.

While the archetypal Mother has infinite forms, we can recognize her as Demeter in search of her lost daughter, the Madonna with the Holy Child, Kwan Yin, and the full-figured goddess figures found at sites of the ancient matriarchal cultures. As the shadow Mother, she is Medea who kills her children, Cinderella's wicked stepmother, any abusive mother, or a woman who doesn't know how to mother because she was not well-enough mothered herself. A self-sacrificing mother who sees herself as a victim is a shadow expression of this Mother archetype.

The Mother's innate rhythm is aligned with *kairos*, timeless time, also called feminine time, and is based in natural rhythms rather than on the clock or what the mind thinks. All women have this Mother archetype operating in them in one way or another, and it interacts with all of the other archetypes, masculine and feminine, on a very personal level. The bright Mother is about cherishing, nurturing, helping, teaching, and protecting those in her care. She truly sees her child and is able to bond and build a healthy attachment with the child. She also knows how to let that child go appropriately when the time is right. The bright archetypal Mother within us, whatever her form, can bring love and healing to the wounded inner child, regardless of our experience with our personal mother.

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A woman in whom the Mother archetype is dominant may feel that she only lives for others, taking care of others. This is where the Mother finds her fulfillment and may feel empty without it. The woman who is primarily Mother may feel deeply bereft when her nest is empty and look for other places to express this energy, or she may open up to develop one of the other archetypal energies. A Mother woman who sacrifices her own life for others, or lives her life vicariously through her husband or children, can feel like a martyr, especially when the others fail to meet her expectations. She can get angry at those she cares for when this happens or turn that anger inward and fall into depression. The woman with strong Mother energy must learn to say NO, give up self-denial, and discover what her own needs and wants are. If she doesn't, she can unconsciously burden others, especially her children, to live out her dreams and longings.

It is the Dark Mother energy that is with us when something is dying, and she gives death when necessary, with consciousness and compassion. Her presence is felt when an abortion is called for, a marriage is ending, or when an idea, a dream, a project, or some conditioned internal belief structure no longer works, serves growth, or sustains life. She is the goddess of entropy, when conditions move from order to disorder. The Mother is the embodiment of paradox: she is both the womb and the tomb.

Mother initiations call us to the healing of our own mother wounds and attachment issues, to look at how we have been, or not been, mothers to ourselves, to our children, and/or to our creations. When the Mother archetype is in shadow, the wounding with our own mother may be profound. Through Mother initiations, we are called to discover and heal the wounds that came from our conception, birth, the attachment issues with our mother, and other mother figures, as well as conditions that may have been passed down to us through our matri-lineage. We sometimes 'carry' the emotional burdens, wounds, unfulfilled dreams, and unfinished business of our mothers and ancestors. When the mother archetype is constellated, it may also bring up issues related to sisters and grandmothers, as well as catalyze issues with close women friends.

When the Mother archetype is in shadow, a woman may not know how, or be able to, take care of her own physical needs, be in her body, form an attachment to others, or nurture a child. She may feel incompetent, or be narcissistic and deny her child her own individuality and experiences. The shadow aspect of the Mother can cause a woman to be absent physically and/or emotionally from her children, ineffectual, controlling, demanding, clinging, devouring, manipulative, or guilt-inducing. She may simply not know how to take care of her children on a very basic physical or emotional level due to her own lack of healthy mothering.

The Mother calls us to embodiment, to the nurturance of our physical life and the life of the planet. One of the most important tasks we have as Mother is to allow our children and our creations to be who and what they are, which may not be perfect or healthy or beautiful in a

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conventional way, or fulfill our images, ideas, or hopes. A mother's greatest challenges are to be present in her own body, and in authentic contact with herself and her children. It may also be extremely difficult and require enormous courage for her to be spacious and allowing enough for her child to go through whatever that child needs to go through, especially when it is painful and/or does not fit her ideas or images of what should or should not be happening. A major task in mother initiations is to let go, to allow and release the child. We cannot know what our child's soul needs, what soul work or karma his or her path requires, and it's not for us to think 'mamma knows best' because in these dimensions, we do not. Surrender beyond anything we think we are capable of or believe we can endure as a mother may be called for.

Mother initiations also open the portals for women who have been abandoned, adopted, given up a child for adoption, lost a child through death, mental illness, addiction, or some other way, to grieve, heal, and open to new ways of being with these losses. Women who have had miscarriages, stillbirths, and abortions can also come to heal, transform, and learn from these profound Mother initiations, as well.

The Mother woman may be split from her erotic Lover energy. Her eros, her energy of relatedness may not be connected to her sexuality. She may use her Mother energy to defend or hide from her erotic inner Lover. In relation to men and marriage, a woman has to be very conscious of how she is relating to her man. If a woman chronically relates to her man through the Mother archetype, treating him as a child rather than a grown masculine partner, she will get a child rather than a partner. This dynamic can give death to the Lover energy in a relationship with a man, ruin their sexual relationship, and engender a lot of unconscious, as well as conscious anger and hurt between the two people. Hint: if you think you know what's good for your partner, what he 'should' or 'should not' be doing, take a good look at what is going on with you. This jeopardizes intimacy.

Through Mother initiations, we can learn to become present to our own embodiment, allowing the comings and goings of the various cycles in our lives, release our creations and our children, and learn to rest in awareness of what is, as it is, whatever it is.

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The Amazon Archetype: Bright and Shadow Potentials

The bright Amazon is often associated with Artemis, the huntress. Toni Wolff (1934) gave this name to women who are independent, unconventional, and highly capable of making their way in the world. They are adventurous, often traveling into the territory traditionally occupied by men in the world. Artemis is often depicted with her bow and arrow and animals, a woman of the wilds, connected to nature and comfortable with solitude. The Amazon woman usually places personal ambition above relationship, is often a career woman, a woman who fights to liberate herself and all women from patriarchal domination. She wants to—and does—make a difference in the world.

We can recognize her as having the qualities of such women as Eve, Susan B. Anthony, Gloria Steinem, Margaret Mead, Hillary Clinton, Sonia Sotomayor, Rosa Parks, Betty Friedan, Sandra Day O'Connor, Princess Diana, Jane Goodall, Eleanor Roosevelt, Queen Elizabeth I, and Oprah. The Amazon has many faces, many appearances in the world, and they all carry a certain spirit of courage, conviction, and confidence in their cause, whatever it may be.

The ancient Amazons were said to be warrior priestesses that ruled a large part of Asia around the Black Sea, and North Africa, except Egypt. They worshipped the Great Goddess, and were ruled by a succession of priestess-queens. It is said that they were the first to tame horses and rode them into battle, casting spells for victory against foreign conquerors who sought to destroy their matriarchal civilizations. In Greek vase paintings, the Amazons were portrayed as strong women, often on horseback, carrying shields, battle-axes, and wearing short tunics and panther-skin capes. Scholars thought the word Amazon was derived from the Greek a-mazos and meant “breastless,” but there is no evidence that they cut off their breasts. (Barbara Walker 1983)

The bright Amazon woman of today is independent, self-contained, adventurous, and achievement oriented. She loves to accomplish things and is able to step into the world with great confidence in ways and places that have been traditionally male. Being successful in whatever she does, especially her vocation in the world, is important to her, and she may choose a public life. Often her work is more important than her relationships, as she tends to be more impersonally related to others than the Mother or Lover. On the shadow side, she may use personal relationships as a vehicle for getting ahead professionally, and she may deal with life's complexities in a more masculine than feminine way. She is a planner, a strategist, a do-er, and takes pride in what she does. Taking time out to rest or do nothing may be a challenge for the Amazon woman.

Sportswomen, business women, politicians, judges, economic, or scientific achievers fit the profile of the Amazon. Trekking the Himalayas, running a marathon, marching for peace,

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dog sledding in the Arctic, speaking out for justice, joining the Peace Corps, or serving in the military and going to war would be things an Amazon woman would do.

The Amazon cultivates the courage (heart) and strength to go beyond her known capabilities, step into unknown territories, prepares herself well for the tasks ahead, and is confident that she will cultivate the skills and the knowledge that she needs to be successful. She knows how to focus on goals and outcomes, and be clear about what is needed to achieve her outcome before she takes action. She very competently takes care of what needs to be done to support her life and her family's. She makes money, pays her taxes and her bills on time. She takes pride in her skills and abilities to negotiate the outer world, and has no problem asking for a pay raise or filing a complaint. She is not fear-less. She is simply willing to meet her fear and keep going forward. Women who have a dominant Lover or Medial dimension really need the help of the Amazon to help them take their gifts into the world. If they cannot access their own inner Amazon, they can hire an Amazon woman to help them.

Our inner Amazon is the most wonderful protectress and advocate for the child within us. The Amazon can show up for that little baby, the young girl, or the teen within who was abandoned or abused. She can say what the child cannot, speak on her behalf. She can confront the abuser, name what happened to her, and tell the truth to herself. She is essential to the creation and maintenance of the safety needed for our preciously vulnerable inner selves to come forth. She knows that any shadow within us, however dark or angry it may appear, is covering a hurting child, a long-dissociated part of ourselves. The Amazon has great instincts regarding danger. She pays attention without being paranoid. She has learned how not to abandon herself, how to show up for herself, as well as for others.

Amazon energy can help a woman define and maintain appropriate boundaries with people, food, money, time, energy, spending, helping others. She challenges us to be scrupulous in our own inner work, and willing to face and meet our shadow. One of her main tasks is to help us discern and protect us from the harsh, self-denying, critical, judgmental, self-sabotaging voices of our inner demons. These are the voices of our old conditioning that do not serve truth, do not come from love, but rather serve to hurt, shame, defeat, and engender fear and self-destruction.

We can learn to recognize these voices, embrace and feed our demons, become familiar with their energy in our bodies, notice when they arise, and come to recognize the trance states that they represent and maintain. We can also learn not take them personally, step back and question their truth in the present moment, and notice how it happens that we believe them. They have no power over us if we do not believe them.

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When we invoke our Amazon, we can face our fears, demons, traumas, and wounds, sometimes with great fierceness, sometimes by nibbling at the edges. Neither is a better way—we simply do it the way it works best each time. The bright Amazon can be clear, assertive, decisive, honest, responsible, courageous, and fiercely compassionate. This means saying “NO!” and setting a limit when we need to, or saying “YES!” when that is the right action. The Amazon is a great ally when we have to meet the hostility or aggression of another, and knows how to do so from a strongly grounded stance, with clarity, truth-telling, assertiveness, and compassion.

Our Amazon can help us to become more embodied and rooted in the earth so that we can feel strong. She can help us do what needs to be done to take good care of our bodies. The conscious Amazon values the kind of strength that is not macho strength, but that which comes from being authentic and vulnerable. She cultivates skillful means and learns to surrender to right action, which sometimes may be non-action. She knows that nothing needs to be done until it becomes obvious. She has learned to do without doing, and to move in her life and the world in alignment with the flow of the Tao. She does not push the river.

Often our greatest Amazon challenge is to tell ourselves the truth about what is so or what has happened, and learn to stay present, embodied, and not abandon ourselves. This may take some practice where there has been serious abuse or abandonment in a woman’s life, and it is radically life-changing when a woman learns how to do this for herself. The Amazon is much needed in all of our relationships with family, friends, lovers, partners, and whatever work we do. Women strong in the other archetypal powers need her strengths and skills.

When our Amazon is in shadow, we may feel completely ineffectual, unassertive, and incapable of making a decision or following through with a plan or a task. A woman with a passive shadow Amazon may be unreliable vis a vis time, commitments, money, or agreements. She does not create boundaries for herself, so people invade her space or walk all over her. She does not say No, may not know how to defend herself, nor know how to protect her inner child. She may be disabled by her fears, low on confidence and self-esteem, afraid to ask for what she wants or needs. Shadow Amazon can also appear aggressive, invasive, defensive, and disrespectful of others and their boundaries. Fear is hidden behind this behavior and she may actually be feeling deep shame about her vulnerability. The shadow Amazon serves the ego’s desires rather than the deepest Truth.

She relates to men as friend, comrade, colleague, competitor, and sister. She may not trust or like men, and, in her shadow form, could even be castrating. Her feminine qualities may have been inhibited, suppressed in her family or culturally, or she may have experienced sexual abuse and trauma at the hands of a man or men, early in life. The Amazon can be a paradox in this way: devoted to supporting women and the feminine principle, her allegiance is to

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something feminine and the fulfillment of her own feminine goals, while her orientation to the world may be more masculine than feminine.

At some very deep level, she may feel cut off from her own femininity, and not have a clue that she is or what that even means. In her conscious denial of the masculine, she becomes the masculine. Jung would say she is animus possessed, where her inner masculine energy dominates her ego. The radical feminists of the early women's liberation movement are an example of this. In shadow, the angry Amazon woman can project onto men the rage she feels at being dominated by her own inner masculine aspect, the animus. A woman can ameliorate animus domination by becoming aware of it and conscious of her connection to the other Feminine archetypes, especially the Lover and the Mother.

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The Lover Archetype: Bright and Shadow Potentials

The Archetypal Lover is the High Priestess of Eros, the feminine principle of relatedness and relationship. The Lover seeks relationships, union, and communion with people, animals, nature, the Mystery and the Divine Beloved. Originally, this archetype was called the *Hetaira* by Toni Wolff. She wrote of the Hetaira as a companion to man, related to the personal psychology of the man, as well as to that of her children and friends. In my 30 years of deep engagement with these archetypes, I realized that the Hetaira is just one expression of the core archetypal structure in women, so I was guided to re-name this archetype the Lover, of which there are many manifestations. There is nothing impersonal about way the Lover relates to others and to the world, as there can be with the Medial or the Amazon.

We can recognize the Lover as Aphrodite, Venus de Milo, Inanna, Lillith, Ishtar, Mother Theresa, the Sacred Prostitute, and every woman who is a yogini, tantrika, or priestess of the heart. She is also Marilyn Monroe, Circe who turns her lovers into swine, the addict whose cravings keep her dancing with ever-hungry ghosts, and the sexually or emotionally abused woman who flees from intimacy. Shadow Lover also appears as any woman with a distorted body image who may also have food issues, is perhaps a compulsive eater, bulimic, or anorexic. She could also be the mistress, the prostitute, the 'other woman' to the man with the motherly wife, the woman who compromises her integrity to keep her lover or partner.

The Lover loves to love, loves to be in love, is passionate about many things. She lives in and from her heart. Relationship is her primary calling, whether it is to a person, group, or place, an animal, the ocean, or the Divine Beloved. She may be an ecstatic who wants no limits or boundaries and wreaks havoc without them, as well as a woman whose tolerance for bliss and joy can be boundless. On the shadow side, her capacity for pain, suffering, depression, and despair can also be boundless if she has not learned skills for working with her emotional issues. She can be addicted to misery and lack of love, highly skilled in proving that she is not worthy of love. The Lover cultivates openness when she feels good, or, when wounded, she can shut her heart down and be inaccessible.

Her capacity to delight others is equaled by her capacity to lead astray. In the service of love she can experience clear seeing from her heart, and in the service of shadow, when her Amazon is not strong, she also has the capacity to be blinded by love. Deep, intimate, loving contact is highly developed in the bright Lover, and lack or loss of contact can take her down the deep black abyss of despair and hopelessness. When this Lover capacity is in shadow, if she is willing and truly committed to love, a woman can learn how to dive deeply into the ocean of darkness and return with pearls.

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The pure, unconditioned, bright Lover within us is like a playful, uninhibited, untraumatized, three-year-old girl. She has no shame, is spontaneous with her feelings, and she feels no need to hide anything of herself. She is free to be who she is, without censure from within. She is open with her need for contact and affection, her expression of pure emotion, and she thrives on physical contact and movement. She is in her body and loves it, loves to move it in dance or yoga, nourishes and decorates herself with beautiful clothes, jewelry, and makeup. She is intensely curious about everything and wants to touch, smell, feel, taste, and listen to the world. She is naturally sensual and sexual, enjoys pleasures of all kinds, including her own sexual pleasure. Direct experience is her domain, as she is wide open to everything and wild in her willingness to follow her desires and her senses, which can sometimes get her into trouble if she is not mindful. Compassion, sensitivity to others' feelings, creativity, playfulness, and recognition of beauty are some of her strongest gifts.

In its full flow, the energy of Eros has the potential to heal anything. When the flow of our Eros is interrupted, shut down in shadow or shame, we do not feel good or happy. It makes it difficult or impossible to relate to others if we are blocked in our own hearts, blocked in our relationship with ourselves. We cannot be present to another if we are not present to ourselves. A woman's Eros, her passion and excitement, can be directed anywhere: toward her partner, her kids, a special place in nature, an art project, dancing, cleaning her closets, or whatever brings her heart joy.

Because the Lover in us usually feels that more is better, she isn't crazy about boundaries or limits on her desires or pleasures. To have healthy relationships, as well as to be healthy physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, the Lover within us needs the help of the Amazon to be able to make appropriate boundaries and to know when enough is enough. Eros is a very powerful energy, and due to our cultural and family conditioning, it is also often cut off, forbidden, taboo. It is very painful when we are having fun and, out of nowhere, the fun police within us show up and the fun is over. Or, we may be making love and feel very juicy and ecstatic when, suddenly, pleasure is cut off by a thought or a comment and we end up collapsing in shame. So many of us were scolded or shamed for touching our own bodies when we were small, told we were dirty 'down there' or made to feel bad or wrong just because we were female. When a woman is well established in her Lover energy and loving her own body, she feels happy and uninhibited and may love to be seen nude. When in shadow, the Lover may want to hide her body, feel shame or disgust for her imperfections and how her body looks.

Some families are very spacious where the Lover child is concerned. They do not shame or punish the child for masturbating, running around naked, making noise, singing, or being a wild child. It is all very natural to them. In families or religions where touch, joy, sensuality, sexuality, dancing, laughing, or even simple fun is not allowed, the Lover falls into shadow and deep shame or even physical illness may be evoked. She may carry this shame or experience

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illness her whole life, if she does not get help. There is always help for these Lover issues. Some cultures do not allow 'too much' fun, ecstasy, pleasure, or joy and it all goes underground, becomes addiction, depression or some other form of broken-heartedness.

It is not unusual for such Lover women to explode inappropriately at some point in their lives when they can no longer stifle their true archetypal nature. This can appear as volcanic rage, an intense emotional meltdown, a hot love affair, addiction, illness, or some transgression of boundaries. What is in us and natural to us cannot be suppressed forever. It will find a way to come forth, sooner or later and it may not be pretty if it has been repressed or suppressed for a long time or a lifetime. Repressed Lover energy could also come forth in healthy ways such as painting, playing the piano, dancing, singing, writing, or painting the house lime green with purple shutters. The natural wildness of the Lover wants to be free to express itself with joy. When distorted somehow, this pure wildness can become wantonness. The Lover holds the potential for a woman to be in right relationship with her heart, her body, and the people in her life. The Lover is the one who wants to learn how to cultivate good, intimate relationships, and for this, she needs to learn the relationship skills very few of us learn in our families.

Being aware of whether we are actually living and alive in our bodies, or not, is essential to coming into right relationship. We need to take good care of our bodies with healthy food and a life-giving lifestyle, adequate sleep, play, fun, creative outlets, and relationships with people that nourish us. We need to know what we are experiencing in our bodies, if we feel alive, vital and juicy, or numb, deadened, energy-less, ill, fatigued, or stressed out. I have heard Marion Woodman say that when there is illness, it indicates that the body is not receiving the soul. There is not full embodiment. By paying attention to the signals, we can easily become aware of what our physical symptoms are telling us, what causes us to be over-stimulated or fatigued, as well as what makes us feel feminine, loved, sensual, juicy, and sexy.

The dis-embodied, dissociated Lover also speaks to us through our accidents, injuries, illnesses, symptoms, energy level, desires, lack of desire, cravings, needs, revulsions. Lover women need to know where the line is for them, whether it's about sleep, food, sex, exercise, ecstasy, men, time, energy, money, and whatever else they are drawn to. This does not come naturally to the Lover. For her, more is better, and when operating from shadow she can go over her edge and crash, after which she is likely to say, "It was well worth it!" It is essential that we learn to listen to our bodies, and honor what they say, for they don't lie. We can ask our bodies what they want and learn to listen to them tell us when they are tired, when we are not getting enough exercise, when we have eaten the wrong foods, what food nourishes us, or what clothes feel good next to our skin. The possibilities are endless for the Lover! Our woman bodies do talk, we can learn to listen and take action. Here is where the Amazon can be very helpful in getting us to the yoga class, or go to bed at 10 not 12, and to put that second cupcake back.

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The Lover draws our attention to beauty of all kinds, as she surrounds herself with as much beauty as possible. Whether it is in the natural world, her home, where she hangs out, what she likes to do, there is always an element of beauty present. Lover women may also be drawn to the business or avocation of beauty in some way as artists, musicians, singers, songwriters, actors, fashion designers, architects, interior designers, chefs, landscape designers, aestheticians, or hair stylists. Women with strong Lover energy may get involved in professions that are oriented around relationships and service, such as psychotherapy, healing, pastoral work, ministry, peace corps, or work with the elderly, disabled, or animals. Helping others, in one way or another, as volunteer, friend, or professional, is often central to the life of the Lover.

The Lover is the High Priestess of Longing. She feels it intensely and, until she learns that longing is a spiritual calling, she usually attaches it to outer objects: lovers, relationships, clothes, substances, food, money, jewelry, and even spiritual awakening. Any ‘thing’ one can long for is an outer object, even an intangible thing like happiness. Through initiation, the Lover comes to realize that attaching her longing to an outer object does not truly fulfill her, even when she gets the thing she longs for. Satisfaction with objects has a shelf life. The fire of longing will keep drawing the Lover to the source, to the Mystery, especially once she realizes what she is *really* longing for.

The most primal wound in every one of us is a Lover wound. We are separated from our mothers at birth, and the wound may have occurred before birth if our mother was not present to our existence within her womb or during the birth. This primal wound of separation affects all of our relationships. The wounding may also be compounded by a traumatic conception or birth, immediate separation from our birth mother without bonding time, a lack of healthy attachment to the mother as an infant and small child, trauma, abandonment, sexual abuse, or severe illness. Premature babies, infants and toddlers who suffer trauma or illness at birth, who are adopted right away, or for one reason or another have to be separated from their mothers for extensive periods of time, suffer this Lover wound deeply all of their lives unless they get help.

Wounding of the Lover can also happen if a child grows up in a rigid household, religious or otherwise, that somehow doesn’t welcome or punishes the little girl’s natural exuberance, playfulness, singing or noisiness, crying, or making crayon marks on the wall. There is a shut-down of emotions and heart connection, as that part of the Lover child falls into shadow and becomes a ‘lost soul’. Sooner or later, these shadow Lover children cry out to be integrated, and must be retrieved for our sense of wholeness and happiness as a woman.

The Lover that was alive and thriving in a girl or woman can also fall into shadow after a rape, an abusive relationship, or a deep loss of a beloved person or animal. After such loss or trauma, we may not feel safe enough to come forth in those old familiar ways. We have to guard against shutting our hearts down. Grief is a powerful teacher as well as an initiation that is

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central to the Lover's experience as a human woman. We know that all things and people, including our own bodies, are impermanent and imperfect, and loss is guaranteed. Grief can put a lid on a woman's life force and joy in existence if it is not met fully. Without the right kind of support, a grieving woman can get stuck in the grief and lose touch with her life. We can grow through grief by meeting it and directly experiencing it, as intense and deep as it is, even if we have to nibble at the edges of it until we can handle more.

A Lover woman can have many different relationships with men. She must guard against treating men as object for her pleasure or emotional fulfillment. She must learn to do her own inner work in order to be able to have a healthy relationship with a healthy man. When a man responds sexually to a woman when that isn't what she wants, she may feel invaded. It's okay to say a big NO! when we feel violated. The presence and help of the inner Amazon is necessary for the Lover woman in the course of protecting her body and her heart from invasion or damage. Our bodies are ours to do with as *we choose*, and that may be a big piece of work for a woman who has been sexually abused or raped. We women need to learn how to carry our Lover energies vertically, route them through our heart center, rather than shoot our sacred Lover shakti out of our second chakra unconsciously. This is a sacred Lover skill that a woman can learn.

Awareness of what we do with our Shakti is needed first. We can learn to walk in the world with the passion and beauty of the Lover without being harmed. We don't have to hide behind a veil in order to be safe as a beautiful, sensual woman. It is vital that a Lover woman not become identified with the powerful feminine Lover energy, the Shakti, that comes through her and use that power to manipulate or seduce men. This is shadow and there is always a price to pay. The Lover is a vessel for the Divine Shakti, and as a conscious vessel, she can serve a man's coming into right relationship with, and integration of, his feminine side as well as the Divine Feminine—just by being herself.

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The Medial: Bright and Shadow Potentials

It is the Medial within that sends us on a search for knowledge of all kinds: spiritual, metaphysical, gnostic, mystical, psychological, intellectual, scientific, genealogical, and technical. Paradoxically, the Medial wants and seeks to know, yet ultimately, through Life's initiations, falls in love with not knowing. As Medial women, we are drawn toward the unknown, the outer edges of conventionality and the familiar—or it draws us. We may be terrified, excited, compelled, and enchanted, all at once. Medial women are seekers and keepers of esoteric knowledge and wisdom, and value gnosis: direct mystical experience. Our Medial dimension helps us to realize eventually that we are that which we have been seeking. We all have this energy available to us in some form, at its most basic level, it is our intuition.

The woman with strong Medial energy is highly intuitive and loves to learn and understand how things work. Taking her computer apart and knowing how to fix the car may be just as compelling as making visionary art or working on a dream. She may be a healer, shaman, ritual maker, mystic, teacher, researcher, visionary, artist, song writer, musician, poet, priestess, or police detective. She may also use her Medial gifts in business or the world of high technology, such as computers, science, forensics, medical research, photography, filmmaking, and digital arts. Having a deep desire, a calling, or a true vocation to serve others with her gifts, her particular soul's purpose may become evident to her when she is a child, or it may not show up until later in life. Many women see glimmers of its presence when they look back at what they were interested in as little girls.

We can recognize the Medial as Sophia, goddess of wisdom, Cassandra who warned of the Trojans but was not believed, Hecate, the wise crone at the crossroads. She is the Oracle of Delphi, the Chanting Priestess of Mexico, and the Dreaming Goddess carved into the cave wall in France. She can also show up as the Wicked Witch of the West, the dark sorceress who casts spells and lays curses upon others, the psychotic woman who carries the family craziness, the promiscuous teenager who acts out her mother's repressed sexuality, or the vicious woman who instinctively goes for the jugular.

The Medial woman serves truth and assists others by helping them find meaning in their life experiences, especially the difficult ones. She holds sacred space for them while they make their way and may offer silence, healing, dream work, ritual, art, poetry, music, song, dance, ecstatic trance, guided inner journeys, astrological readings, channeled material, or teachings. She can be evocative, provocative, and inspiring, as well as a disturbing bringer of chaos when she is not self aware. She can also intoxicate and entrance others, take them into sublime experiences, whether it is through a painting, a song, dance, writing, or trance, and she can lead

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them into harm's way if her intentions are power-driven. It all depends on how conscious she is and where her devotion lies.

The Medial is the High Priestess of liminal space, the chaotic, uncomfortable territory between 'here' and 'there', the pupa stage we must pass through in any initiation. She is the wise woman who greets and guides seekers and pilgrims as they cross thresholds and make their passages. Her primary mode of being in the world is to bring new ideas, images, and information in from the vast realms of collective consciousness, as well as from stillness. She lives on the border between realities, mediating the depths of the collective unconscious to those around her, and dives deeply into her own unconscious, willing to experience and explore the unknown contents, whatever they are. She has courage and a healthy respect for the power of the unconscious and what emerges from it, whether it is bright or dark.

A strongly Medial woman needs to develop the focused awareness and boundaries of the Amazon woman, as she may be a psychic sponge, absorbing the feelings and unconscious contents from those around her. She must learn to distinguish what belongs to her, and what belongs to others, what is personal and what is impersonal. The Medial may be more inclined than women with other archetypal strengths to lose her sense of self and unable to know what she herself needs. This can easily happen to some when they are with other people, groups, or in relation to ideologies. She is so highly attuned to what others think, feel, want, and need—even if they don't know it themselves—that she can end up living someone else's life or agenda. If she herself is not well-grounded in her own sense of herself, holding her boundaries well, and does not know how her gift is to be used, the gift can become her curse. The inner Amazon can help a Medial women learn how to define and sustain their own boundaries.

It is essential for a Medial woman who is developing her gifts to have a mentor and work with teachers and elders. Not only for the purpose of learning skills and techniques, it is wise for a Medial to be in the field of other Medial women or men because much of the education of a Medial woman comes through non-verbal transmissions. It is all too easy to become identified with the powerful energies and the power of accessing the other dimensions. She can become inflated, grandiose, even dangerous, if not conscious. The core shadow of the Medial archetype is a strong drive for, or addiction to, the power.

The power-driven shadow of the Medial can compromise her integrity to manipulate, control, or violate others. There is ample evidence of this happening with clergy, healers, educators, and mental health professionals. No one is invulnerable to the seduction of power. The darkest shadow expression of the Medial is a woman who uses black magic, satanic ritual, sorcery, mind control, curses and spells cast to control, manipulate, hurt or even kill others. Evil exists in the world of duality, and many horrific things happen that are beyond what our minds and hearts can believe or take in, but they do exist. It's not all on tv or in other people's worlds.

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We must not be naïve, attached only to seeing what is light. We must be scrupulous and willing to look for the truth, no matter what it is.

It is highly arrogant to think that we could never fall into unconsciousness with our Medial gifts, cross the line into anything inappropriate. We all have blind spots and vulnerabilities and, as a Medial, we are emotionally, psychically, and energetically open to all kinds of energies and dimensions and their intrusion into our field of consciousness. This is why it is so vital to have a good sense of self, strong, clear boundaries, an ongoing spiritual practice, a peer community, and elders. It is also essential for a Medial woman to be very grounded and embodied, and willing to see the truth, no matter what it is. The inner Amazon is essential.

When our Medial energy is active, we are open to receiving insight, guidance, ‘downloads’, and information in countless forms from many dimensions, including dreams, visions, art, music, writing, poetry, healing work, mediumship, nature, and the world at large. We must be able to discern our sources, as well as the personal from the impersonal. When our Medial gifts or vocation are denied or refused, as when any aspect of us is refused expression, a very painful journey can ensue. In the shamanic world, a person who is called to be a shaman and refuses the call suffers physical, mental, or spiritual illness, and a sense of soul loss, until they agree to serve and use their gifts appropriately. This could be true of an artist who isn’t making art, a healer who isn’t doing healing work. Medial energy is powerful and needs to flow and be integrated in us and into our lives in some way. We don’t have to know how to do it, or what to do, we are always guided if we are willing. Helpers and teachers show up at the right time.

When developing our Medial gifts, we must learn to trust our awareness and not let our thinking minds or other people engender self doubt. Self doubt can be demonic and completely undermine any woman’s gifts. Learning to sit in silence, live from the heart, and rest as awareness without thought, brings discernment and recognition of what is pointing to Truth and what is story made up by the mind. All of our Medial skills grow over time if we tend that garden and are around people who support this.

A Medial woman can go into overload if she doesn’t know how to take care of herself, be able to tune things out, or know what her limits are. As we learn what works to support us, and what does not, we may find that we cannot tolerate certain vibrations, television, people, crowds, or shopping malls for long without our nervous system feeling over-stimulated and raw. We may find that we have to be outside with our feet on the earth every day in order to stay grounded and balanced. Medial Crones may be called to mentor, teach, or midwife younger women into their Medial gifts and work. Medial energies often burst into full flowering as we move into and through our second Saturn return, around our late fifties and onward into

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Cronehood. For some, this next opening may happen at menopause, in which case it could happen sooner than the late fifties for some women.

Medial women must take extra effort to be embodied, grounded, and take very good care of their health. Our bodies absorb and feel the energies of what we are picking up in the field. We process things on the emotional and spiritual levels much faster than our bodies can because the body is third dimensional. The energies that come through can be damaging to our health if our bodies are clogged with unconscious emotions, unhealed wounds, and lack of consciousness. The body may be unable to titrate the input. While a Medial woman may prefer being disembodied and traveling in other dimensions, being in her body, having a sturdy physical container, will be her greatest asset. Her Medial work with others will also be better. Medial women must pay deep attention to what their body is telling them.

To some degree, all children are Medial up to a certain age. We may have felt and been aware of everything going on in our family of origin, as well as with others around us, and been confused, overwhelmed, and frightened by it all. We may have known things we didn't want to know, and been confused because we didn't know how we knew these things. Sometimes Medial kids think they are the cause of bad things happening simply because they were aware of them at some level, sometimes before they happened. Medial children are often the carriers of, and act out the unconscious family shadow, and sometimes get punished, scapegoated, or banished in some way. The worst thing for a Medial child is to be told that she is crazy when she see and names things that family members, especially parents or authority figures, deny. This is an insidious form of abuse and can cause dissociation, deep self hate, and self doubt. The child's Medial may also go completely underground, into the shadows.

In some families, when the four year old says she sees fairies and hears angels singing, that is well received and encouraged, while in other families, she may be told to stop making things up or be punished for acting weird. As with all of the archetypes, our conditioning has a lot to do with how well we embrace our Medial dimension, or not. In many dysfunctional families, there is usually at least one child who is extremely Medial naturally or becomes that way out of the need to know for self protection and survival. Early on, it may have become very clear that we have to hide what we see and know, that we cannot speak the obvious without punishment, so we decide, consciously or unconsciously, that the seer and knower in us is dangerous or bad.

The shadow Medial can appear as one who is run by fear, hyper-vigilant, paranoid, psychotic, lacking trust in the world and/or her own experiences. Here's where the importance of support comes in when our Medial energies are coming out of the shadows. It is vital to become aware of this old conditioning and to heal these wounds or damage can be done to self and others.

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Medial initiations call us to realize the legitimacy of an inner feminine spiritual authority in a patriarchal world that has denied and denigrated the Medial woman for thousands of years. We may be called to a place of visibility in the world with our Medial gifts. Coming out as a Medial woman can be very scary if we don't have support. The memory of the Inquisition resides in the collective unconscious, a time in history when anyone who was overtly Medial, like an herbalist, healer, or midwife, was tortured and killed. Inquisition memories may arise in a Medial woman and must be cleared as she develops her gifts.

Most often, they show up when she steps out into the world for the first time to start a practice, or when she becomes visible in some new way, like offering a workshop or publishing a book about her work. It is part of the Medial woman's initiation to face that collective memory and meet the fear face to face. Self doubt can always interfere, and so can the people in a woman's life who fear the Medial world and feel threatened by what she is doing.

The Medial woman tends to evoke archetypal awareness in those around her, especially certain men. It is essential that we realize that this is not personal, though the man may think it is, and we must not identify with any of it. This would be to go unconscious of the power at hand and wreak havoc, create chaos, and potentially cause harm. Good, clear boundaries are essential when working with men. We need to be aware that we are a vehicle of the Sacred Feminine for grace, healing, and awakening, as well as support for a man's integration of his own inner feminine. As Medial women, we must not receive the man's projections as personal, as they are not about us, even if the man thinks they are—and he probably will. Holding a tight container with strong energetic and emotional boundaries is vital to the safety and protection of the man's trust in us as helper. We must be impeccable and scrupulous in our own self awareness and inner work. When we are not clear about what is happening, we absolutely must get help for ourselves.

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The Queen

In the circle of the Sacred Feminine, I visualize the Mother in the North, the Amazon in the East, the Lover in the South, and the Medial in the West, and the Queen in the center. The Queen archetype is the symbol of wholeness and a woman's full potential as a deeply initiated woman. Her essential nature is pure awareness, alive and awake in an inhabited, ensouled, woman's body. Every woman carries this archetype of wholeness within her, and it is our *entelechy*, our natural instinct, to unfold toward the fulfillment of what we truly are meant to be.

The Queenly woman stands in the center 'at the still point of the turning world' (Eliot, 1943). She is both the dance and the stillness, the embodiment of opposites within that embrace everything. I cannot recall who said this originally but, I see her as the circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. The Queenly woman is living embodied paradox. She and her shadow—she does have one as all humans do—embody all of the other feminine archetypes bright and shadow, even while she is awake and aware of the fact that she is awareness itself, becoming increasingly conscious of who and what she is.

Not bound up in dualistic thinking, she has learned to hold the conflict of opposites within her own container, her heart, and endure the tension until her awareness pops into the non-dual spaciousness beyond the tension, the spaciousness that holds everything. She is willing to feel all of her feelings, be uncomfortable, knowing that's just how it is at times. She is increasingly less attached to life being this way or that way, or the need to do anything until it is obvious. She practices surrender to what is, and is increasingly free of the impulse to control, make meaning, analyze, understand, or know anything. She knows that she is not in control and never has been. Fear of the unknown is no longer an issue since she has recognized that all of her fear was of some idea of the unknown, not the unknown itself. In fact, she has fallen in love and in trust with the unknown.

She knows that she doesn't know and appreciates the freedom this gives her. Having to know what is next, what to do, and to figure things out in her mind used to be stressful and full of struggle. Her direct experience over time has shown her that she can rest in the trust that all is taken care of and what is needed appears when it is needed. She has realized that there is no place to go, nothing to do, and nothing to get. Everything we need is right here, complete in every moment, and we can realize that if we simply drop into the moment, rest as awareness, without thought—even for a moment.

The Queen has relaxed into who and what she is, and recognizes that however she is, is just right. Imagine that for a moment. Who and what you are at this moment is just right, just as you are. Without engagement with, or attachment to, the mind's judgments and critiques, shoulds and should nots, her life is very peaceful. These things still arise, but she has no interest in engaging them or believing them. If she does get caught or triggered by a thought, she sits in silence and it dissolves. She has learned numerous practices for working with her human conditioning and uses them when guided. She is consciously committed to her inner work and the practices that serve her consciousness.

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She is spacious, still, compassionate, and loving, and completely embraces herself when she is none of these things, and much more their opposite. She knows that she is the all of everything, and anything can appear at any moment, including her shadow. She is very real, very human, and is not trying to be some idealized version of herself. The Queenly woman has a wide range of emotions that come and go. She is, earthy, quirky, eccentric, and fun. Her sense of humor has also developed over the years, so she can easily laugh at herself without being self-deprecating. The Queen knows that we are not the roles we have or have had, nor are we the jobs we have held or the vocation to which we have devoted ourselves. We are not anything that we have ever thought we were or think we are now.

Queenly women are women who wholeheartedly embrace their humanness and in so doing, they serve as priestesses of the Sacred Feminine. They serve to remind or teach us that we are both body and soul, human and divine, form and formless, in a woman's body. We are born, we love, we hate, we live, we bleed, we make love, we birth, we nurture, we rage, we work, we struggle, we give to family and to the world. We grieve, we celebrate, we get sick, we get divorced, we get old, and we die. We also laugh, we weep, we pray, we sing, we paint, we howl for the loss of those we love and the so-called mistakes we made because we are so imperfect, as well as innocent. A woman's life is a glorious mess at times, and a beauty beyond description, sometimes all at once. A Queen loves it all and can serve to support other women in loving it all. She has learned to welcome everything and be curious.

She has also learned to cherish and trust her longing, to sit in its fire and not burn. She has been initiated into the koan 'carry the fire and not get burned' and while she can guide you toward it, she cannot tell you what it means. You must find that out for yourself. She sometimes sits with the following koans: *What am I? What am I doing here? Where did I come from? What am I for?*

I recently heard the poet, David Whyte, ask the most wonderful question: "*What is the conversation you were made for?*" Koans are questions that are unanswerable by the thinking mind and intended to take us beyond the mind, beyond thinking, to directly experience the answer. Anything the mind comes up with is only a thought, a manifestation of pure awareness but, in itself, it has no real substance or truth. A thought is not truth, and it's not *not* truth. It's just thought, a kite flying in the mind, and it will probably change the next time you ask the question.

The Queen knows that there is only *this moment, now*. She lives as fully and as authentically as possible. She also lives simply so that she can have the time she needs to be with her Self, to be creative or silent, or do nothing at all. She is utterly real, knowing that there is no time to waste. She is aware of how exquisitely wabi sabi she is in her imperfections, incompleteness, and impermanence, as well as in the utter perfection of all of it, as it is.

A woman who is Queen acts according to her own nature, and is deeply connected to nature. She abides by no rules, she lives from her heart and trusts her instincts. She is not bound by conventionality in any way. She is and does as she is moved to. She trusts what arises in her

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as what is, in any given moment, and trusts that what is happening (or has happened) is exactly what is supposed to be—otherwise it would be different. She is in harmony with Life as it is, even when it is chaotic or entropic. Cycles are embedded in her body and connect her to the earth. She cultivates simplicity in her life, her work, her relationships with others and herself. She no longer allows her precious energy to go to non-essential things or relationships that do not bring her joy. Her time and energy are precious, as she knows it is limited in this form.

The Queen within us directly experiences herself and each one of us as a unique and holy creation. As she ages, she may consider herself, or be considered a hag, which is not what we typically think it is. The word is from the root word *hagia*, meaning *holy*, and is associated with the principle of feminine wisdom, Hagia Sophia. She is a woman who has gained wisdom by living a conscious life. Each unique archetypal initiation, has led her here, now, to this awareness, one breath at a time.

Her identity no longer comes from her roles or status in a family or the world. Her sense of self no longer comes from other people as it did when she was burdened by her own conditioning. The rules and definitions of family, lineage, church, school, peers, etc. do not matter to her or have the effect that they once did. She is her own woman, a deeply initiated *virgin* in the most profound sense of the word, “one in herself” belonging to no other, as Esther Harding wrote in *Woman’s Mysteries Ancient and Modern* (1971). True to her own nature and instinct, the Queen has no need to please anyone anymore, and few, if any, expectations, though she may have aspirations. If expectation arises, she sees it for what it is and is increasingly less willing to engage it.

Initiations have brought her en face with all that is not authentically her. The radiance of her true nature shines through. She lives with grace and ease. Having walked through dark passages many times in her life, having lost or given up much of what she has loved or used to be attached to, she clings to nothing. Nothing has to be any particular way, as she knows that things are what they are. Struggling against that brings suffering and she is done with the suffering of the victim. She is more than willing to bear what is hers to bear, and does so gracefully and authentically. She also mentors and supports others as they make their initiatory passages.

The Queen has re-membered herself. She has walked the spiral of initiation for a long time and has retrieved so much of her once-lost soul, that she has a flowing access to all of the other archetypal energies. She is no stranger to shadow, she has met and embraced this worthy opponent many times and in many ways. Each time, behind the mask of fierceness or passivity, she found a beautiful child. She adores the child within her, and is always ready to welcome the next emergence of shadow. The Queen realizes that no matter how awake she is, life is going to keep being life and, particularly, as she ages, life will bring more challenges, losses, and surrender. She has made friends with grief and can allow it to co-exist in her heart with joy.

In fairy tales, and even in our own lives, shadow Queens are mean, wicked, and evil. These are ‘faux’ queens, not worthy of the name Queen. A truly Queenly woman continues to

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work with her shadow, and it seems to come through the other four archetypes, as the Queen in this cosmology is the integration of all of the other four. So we can look there for the shadow that a woman who is Queen must address. She is not beyond shadow, but she is vigilant and consciously addressing her shadow in the other archetypal domains.

In her Queenship, a woman is magnificently creative, fruitful, generous, loving, and compassionate. She cares about others, makes her choices with seven generations in mind. She is full of potential, fertile and juicy, even though she may no longer bleed. Receptive devotion is the tone of her life, honoring all of her own imperfect humanness. The Queen is not some model of perfection but rather of wholeness, awake to what is. She is a real woman, in some ways more vulnerable and fragile than ever. She has found her face and she loves it with all of her being. She can teach us to look inward, not outward, to discover our own Queen. She is here now—go look in the mirror.

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About Sheila Foster, M.A.



Since 1980, I have been passionately in love with the worlds that have opened for me and others via Jungian psychology, archetypes, and Sacred Feminine Initiation. It has been my devotion to explore and engage these fertile and mysterious territories, both personally and professionally. I have always been in love with the Mystery and directly experience it via this path of initiation.

In 1983, I was guided to found the Temenos Center, and the women's mystery school, the Temple of the Sacred Feminine, emerged within that sacred space several years later. I essentially serve as a companion, guide, and midwife to both women and men in their journeys to awaken. The Temple of the Sacred Feminine continues to be a vessel of Sacred Feminine initiation that offers women a *temenos* in which to explore and engage their own healing and spiritual awakening process. Many retreats, workshops, and teleconferences are open to men, as well. This work can meet people where they are in their lives.

While I was trained as a psychotherapist with an M.A. in Counseling Psychology thirty years ago, and having a B.A. in English, my most important and profound training has come through all of the initiations over the years. My own mysterious, feminine, human life has offered me my deepest, most profound initiations, teachings, and skills, for which I am grateful beyond words. I love my work, as well as writing, photography, making multi-media art, and being out in nature with my poodle boy.

I bow to the many extraordinary Teachers who have made such a vast difference to my life and my work. I am especially grateful to my children, my soul friends, and to the wonder-full women and men with whom I have been walking this Sacred Feminine path.

The Temple of the Sacred Feminine continues to be a vessel of initiation that offers women a sacred space in which to explore and engage their own spiritual awakening process and healing. We also offer retreats and workshops that are open to men. I am located in Boulder, Colorado and work regularly in Maryland. I am available to offer this work in other places, as well. Please see the **Events** listing on the Temple home page. Offerings include:

- ♥ Portal Sessions for individuals and couples for healing and initiation work
- ♥ Teleconferences, telephone sessions, in-person sessions
- ♥ Women's Groups, retreats and intensives for both men and women
- ♥ The Temple of the Sacred Feminine in MD
- ♥ I am available to work with established groups

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If you would like to be on my email list, please email me. Please feel free to pass on the link to this little e-book to friends. **Sheila's Email:** temenosctr@aol.com

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