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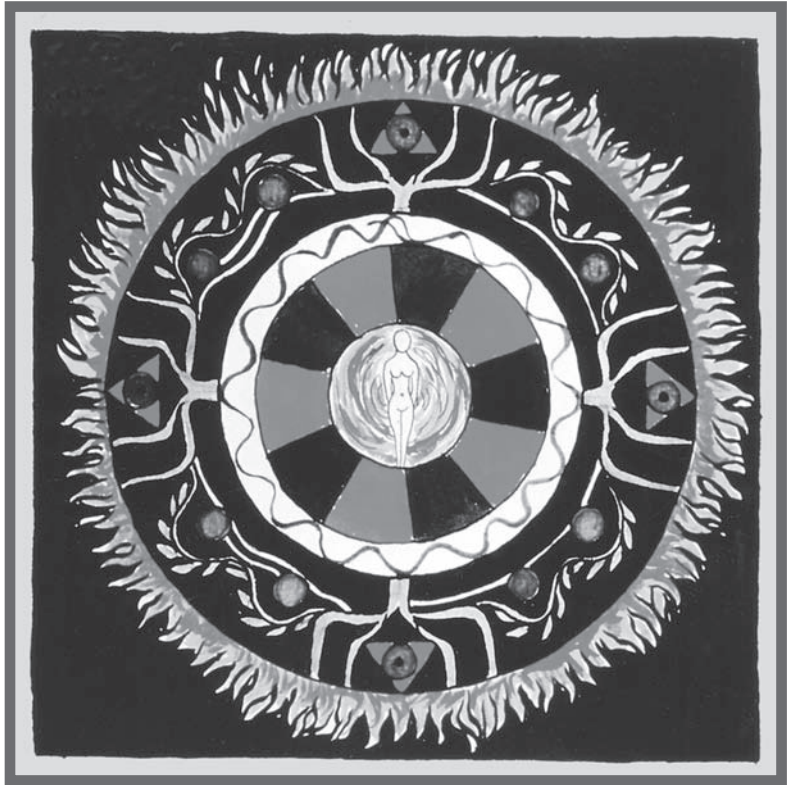
*Carolyn and Ernest Fay Series in Analytical Psychology*

David H. Rosen, General Editor

The Carolyn and Ernest Fay edited book series, based initially on the annual Fay Lecture Series in Analytical Psychology, was established to further the ideas of C. G. Jung among students, faculty, therapists, and other citizens and to enhance scholarly activities related to analytical psychology. The Book Series and Lecture Series address topics of importance to the individual and to society. Both series were generously endowed by Carolyn Grant Fay, the founding president of the C. G. Jung Educational Center in Houston, Texas. The series are in part a memorial to her late husband, Ernest Bel Fay. Carolyn Fay has planted a Jungian tree carrying both her name and that of her late husband, which will bear fruitful ideas and stimulate creative works from this time forward. Texas A&M University and all those who come in contact with the growing Fay Jungian tree are extremely grateful to Carolyn Grant Fay for what she has done. The holder of the McMillan Professorship in Analytical Psychology at Texas A&M functions as the general editor of the Fay Book Series.



*The Old Woman's Daughter*



*The Old Woman's  
Daughter*

Transformative Wisdom  
for Men and Women

CLAIRE DOUGLAS

*Foreword by David H. Rosen*

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*For the Grandmothers:  
Annie Johnson Douglas,  
who died before I was born;  
Jessie Forbes Stewart,  
whom I barely knew;  
and the Old Woman,  
who champions all that has been left out.*

The Tao is called the Great Mother . . .  
It gives birth to infinite worlds.  
—*Tao Te Ching*



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# *Series Editor's Foreword*

DAVID H. ROSEN

Musical rhythm and harmony find their way into  
the inward places of the soul.

—Plato

We were all reared in the dissonance of patriarchal culture. Dr. Claire Douglas immerses us in matriarchal culture as well. This book utilizes Wise Old Women of the West (similar to Hildegard of Bingen's Sophia, "the highest and fiery power") and of the East (such as Tara, who is richly described in the text).<sup>1</sup> By emphasizing both sides (West/East, Fire/Water, Masculine/Feminine, Logos/Eros), Douglas helps us balance, integrate, harmonize, interconnect, and proceed on the Way toward wholeness. We learn how healing is related naturally to the Motherline, attunement, and cherishment.

While reading and editing this well-researched book, which is written in a feminine style that enlivens scholarship, I changed and owned my midwife identity (something Claire Douglas mentions in the Acknowledgments). Once I dreamed that I helped myself give birth to my own baby. Following that dream and a hard labor, I did give birth to a book, *Transforming Depression: Healing the Soul through Creativity*. In the dedication to my three daughters I write, "My dedication to the feminine is natural since the *sui generis* Soul, the archetypal feminine, is the only hope for humankind individually and collectively."<sup>2</sup> I recall Joseph (Jo) Wheelwright, one of my favorite Jungian analysts

and mentors, who is mentioned more than once in Douglas's book, saying, "I'm one of the very few male feminists around." That was over thirty years ago, and Jo was clearly way ahead of his time. Now I am ready to declare that I am a feminist and part of the Motherline.

This volume is the fifth in the Carolyn and Ernest Fay Series in Analytical Psychology that concerns a feminine mode of therapy. The first is *The Stillness Shall Be the Dancing: Feminine and Masculine in Emerging Balance*, by Marion Woodman. The second is *Gender and Desire: Uncursing Pandora*, by Polly Young-Eisendrath. The third is *Memories of Our Lost Hands: Searching for Feminine Spirituality and Creativity*, by Sonoko Toyoda. And the fourth is *La Curandera: Healing in Two Worlds*, by Clarissa Pinkola Estés.<sup>3</sup> My editorial midwifery now seems like synchronicity. Helping Claire Douglas and these other women give birth to these culture-changing works gives me immense satisfaction. Now back to *The Old Woman's Daughter*.

Dr. Douglas's book contains a mixture of scholarship, theory, and autobiographical material as she faces, works through, and creatively writes about her "deviant reality." She shares healing dreams, confronts her feelings, and mines gold from the shadow that provides fuel for her creative transformation. Douglas is deeply original in the way she combines history, myth, personal story (including poetry), and analytical case examples to create new theory. Her work is an innovative and creative way of generating theory, doing therapy, and being in the world. We see how her inner spiritual change is reflected in her enlightened political views regarding what is happening in the world. Parts of her book remind me of Sue Monk Kidd's *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*,<sup>4</sup> as both include a woman's journey to the Sacred Feminine. Something I especially like about Douglas's book is how she applies feminine wisdom to both men and women.

In chapter 2, her description of a lost Vietnam veteran who found himself through worshiping Vajrayogini (a female Buddha) is particularly moving and touching. Also in this chapter Douglas describes being in a mandala dance celebrating the various forms of Tara. This made me think of C. G. Jung's statement, "Because of the protection it implies, the magic circle or mandala can be a form of mother archetype."<sup>5</sup>

I feel a kinship with Claire Douglas in chapter 3, entitled “Cherishment: A Different Way of Doing Therapy and Being in the World.” She writes about the healing relationship in therapy as involving loving concern, acceptance, empathy, mutuality, connectedness, human warmth (expressed through attunement or even silence), compassion, and meaning. I appreciate her multifaceted description of the feminine mode of therapy, which involves deep love, tenderness, cherishment, and play. Douglas correctly points out that one must also know the other side, that is, the shadow of all of the aforementioned positive attributes in order truly to be involved in healing, that is, in a process toward wholeness.

In chapter 4, Dr. Douglas’s long analytic case of a troubled man is refreshingly honest and insightful in its handling of transference and countertransference. It becomes abundantly clear that she is practicing what she is writing about, to the benefit of all concerned (including the reader).

In conclusion, this is a very personal yet universal book. It pulls readers in and interacts with them. Claire Douglas has written an extremely valuable treatise about the Old Woman’s Daughter (the archetypal feminine) and heart wisdom for both men and women. Be prepared to change, as it is a fiercely creative and loving book.



## *Acknowledgments*

I would like to acknowledge and thank the many kind and generous people who helped make this book possible. First of all, I am grateful to Carolyn Grant Fay for her sturdy and caring support of the Fay Lectures and their subsequent publication in book form. She has given a great gift to Jungians everywhere in providing a forum in which Jungian analysts around the world can gather and explore exciting new developments in analytical psychology.

Next, I want to thank David H. Rosen. Or, rather, I prefer to give him a great hurrah as the ever-patient, connected, and caring mid-wife of both my lectures and this book. Also, my thanks to all in the audience at the Fay Lectures. I especially valued our half hour's discussion after each lecture, and the meetings and dinners—celebrations—many of us had together. This book, including much of the Introduction, is a much better one thanks to their questioning, suggestions, and comments.

Also, my deepest thanks to my patients for their commitment to a difficult process and for all I have learned from them over the years. I thank those, especially, who gave me permission to use their material in this book. They have seen and approved what I have written and the changes I have made to protect their identity.

Now to individuals. Thanks first of all to my son, Matthew, for his consistent and good-humored encouragement and for his faxing me just the right quotation at just the right time to allow me to break a challenging writing block and commit myself to start writing what I know. I would like to thank Clarissa Pinkola Estés for her stalwart and loving support of me and this work, closely followed by Betty Meador

and Mel Kettner, who each read the first draft and gave me invaluable feedback, editorial pointers, and encouragement. I am grateful to the Women's Group of the C. G. Jung Society of Los Angeles and to my Buddhist sangha for bearing me up when I felt I was sinking into wordlessness.

Other analysts contributed much support and insight in various large and small ways—all deeply appreciated: John Beebe, Harriet Friedman, Barry Miller, Donald Sloggy, Sonoko Toyoda, and Deborah Wesley, especially. My thanks to Lore Zeller and others at the Los Angeles C. G. Jung Library and Bookstore for their interest in my work, for answering my questions, and for tracking down vagrant references.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks to Barbara D. Stephens, whose unexpected death leaves an impossible gap in my circle of friends.



*The Old Woman's Daughter*



## *Introduction*

*The Old Woman's Daughter* embodies one more of my attempts to find the Old/New Woman's voice and to share it with others, an attempt I hope many readers also will want to undertake. Whether one defines oneself as male or as female (or as a mixture, as we all are), the world needs authentic voices resonating within it. Authentic voices rise from the Old Woman's forgotten circles of relatedness and contribute crucial new and old ways of knowing to this beleaguered planet.

I stop here after only two sentences, as the divisions I was making feel false. Let me rephrase: this voice speaks what it knows and wants to be of use.

How can I speak more authentically, when the language I was brought up to speak does not fit, yet its words are the only ones I know? They are words from a socioculture that has long silenced this sort of voice. It finds me and others like me divisive and troublesome, yet, of larger concern, if we stay silent, it seems hell-bent on destroying itself and the planet as well. I cannot get away or separate myself from my alien culture, as I am part of it: born of warlike people in a warring age and, like them, divided and contentious. Yet, maybe because of this dissonance, I am drawn to others who stand a bit apart from what we have made of this world, and they to me. Our task seems to be what poet Marge Piercy has called "unlearning to not speak."<sup>1</sup> As we find our voices and enter deeper into the world, what we, the formerly dispossessed, share, and may be able to teach, contains the Old Woman's knowledge of interconnectedness and the flow that links everything in this universe. This voice needs to become louder

in its cherishing of this planet and all that is within it. We need to find ways to say, and stand up for, what we know. We need to learn to speak an unborrowed language that flows toward peace, compassion, conscious harmony, wisdom, personal responsibility, and the joyful contemplation and action that can help heal both our internal and our external worlds.

The practice of wholeness that this outlook embodies seems at odds with our great, yet impoverished, Judeo-Christian-Mohammedan heritage, a heritage ever more impoverished by its divisiveness. Patrifocal culture splits connection into opposites rather than creating a sense of oneness: me and you, for instance; or male and female; them and us. And it further splinters the world soul into infinite other oppositions such as humans and nature (or humans and the divine), good and evil, heaven and hell, war and peace. It further divides itself into haves and have-nots, wealth and poverty, enemy and friend, victory and defeat. But it all comes down to the breaking of connection: the basic, erroneous division into me and not me.

Many centuries ago, our developing civilizations overran and suppressed matriarchal consciousness and silenced what was once a technologically backward, but embodied and large-spirited, oral tradition of a Motherline. This created the Western world as we now know it and is part of our history. This book, however, will be history written from another point of view. It includes what H  l  ne Cixous and Catherine Cl  ment call the Imaginary, an area the culture excludes:

It will be a history read differently, at once the same in the Real and an other in the Imaginary. These narratives, these myths, these fantasies, these fragments of evidence, these tail ends of history do not compose a true history. To be that, it would have to pass through all the registers of the social structure, through its economic evolution, through analysis of the contradictions that have made and are making history. This is not my object. Instead, it is a history, taken from what is lost within us of the oral tradition, of legends and myths—a history arranged the way tale-telling women tell it.<sup>2</sup>

I plan to open up the scholarly discourse I was taught in order to tell tales that include what my body and soul still remember from my mother tongue. To this end, I merge some history with personal experience and add stories, myths, poetry, and dreams. On a personal level, this book reflects and may arise from the actual loss of a way of speaking and being for which I still yearn.

I was born in England, though my blood lineage and sensibility is that of a Celt or Gaelic Scot. One of my Scottish grandmothers, Jessie Forbes Stewart, was an uneducated “granny woman”: a herbalist who listened to animals and knew, she told me, what the trees were saying. Yet I hardly knew her. She spoke with a deeply comforting Scottish burr, thick as the coarse-grained bread she baked, while my mother had developed a clipped and stylish tongue.

My mother felt ashamed of her backward mother and raced to rid



*Jessie Forbes Stewart, 1900. Douglas family archives.*

herself of her working-class past. Instead, she embraced the quick pulse of fashionable London and then New York, making herself up quite courageously as she went. All I knew of my grandmother came from a few memorable walks in Saint James' Park before World War II (that was when she told me about the trees) and then no letters, but an occasional pound note in a greeting card. I am clear-eyed enough about myself to know that growing up in the United States in the 1940s and the 1950s, I probably would have been as embarrassed by my grandmother as I was by my self-conscious and day-dreamy self.

I blame and bless my grandmother for my problem with words. She spoke my mother tongue to me, and I long to recover its down-to-earthness, its humor, and what people who write about matriarchal consciousness would call its mythopoeic quality. It came naturally to her. She loved making healing potions of one kind or another; she delighted in making up and telling stories, the more fanciful the better. She knew of sacred places where she prayed and of haunts to avoid. She sometimes appeared as dark and stormy as the weather, but lighted up and even rejoiced if I remembered a dream.

It is partly because of her that I still remember what was educated, so severely, out of me and what I consciously long forgot. Unlike the scientific rationalist I was supposed to be, and for many years believed I was, my truer self values, conserves, and wants to sustain—even save and restore—this mother tongue. I want to reclaim my grandmother's essence. She had such an expansive sense of being in the world; things were possible whether or not they were up-to-date or had been scientifically proven. She had an easy and natural sense of responsibility toward all living things and paid vivid attention to them. I imagine that she knew all about linkage, reciprocity, kinship, connection, and that she, too, must have felt out of place and alienated in the modern world. Knowing her so fleetingly allows me to give her all the parts of myself that went missing for so long as I struggled to be what I was told I was.

My grandmother may well be one source of my lifelong interest in woman's psychology or, rather, the psychology of the feminine. That interest stems partly from a feeling that my grandmother's voice, and voices like hers, have been ignored or silenced. Without her presence,

I was left struggling for a voice that was authentically my own. Yet I have had to borrow the words with which I attempt to express my deviant reality from a father tongue. Borrowing this way, however, subverts at the same time, for I am after different, more authentic meanings, which slip sideways, behind, or a bit askew from family, place, culture, and history. This has always been the job of outsiders or poets, whether man or woman, straight or gay, dark skinned or white, migrant Celt or native-born American, or any other of the opposites through which our father tongue divides and separates.

My fractured adult being, misplaced in the United States, received comfort and healing when I first discovered Sappho, Emily Dickinson, and even Adrienne Rich—women who spoke in tones for which I yearned and who led me back to my own grandmother’s archaic clarity. What comfort, too, when I found Carl Jung and learned that my connection with fairy tales, myth, and dreams was not the vapid escapism it was labeled, but a source that he, too, valued. Jung never lost what he learned from the peasants of his childhood world. It comforts me to think that he would have felt at home with my grandmother and that they would have had much to talk about. I drew comfort, also, from reading Jung’s ideas about the anima and the animus: the feminine in the man, the masculine in the woman.

Jung’s concept of the Self recalls my mother tongue to me: he defined the Self as a core part of one’s being that includes all the opposites and takes in the cosmos as well; it encompasses wholeness rather than being ego-centered and limited inside the tight boundaries of the skin.

I recovered other pieces of my mother tongue in Mahayanan, especially Tibetan, Buddhism. Concepts such as balance, harmony, centeredness, wholeness, unity are taught not only as ideals but also as something here, present, now, within each one of us. Both Jung and Buddhists teach ways to access what I have come to call our original face. Through meditation as well as through analysis, ordinary people with some dedication and will can take on the great issues, petty irritations, sorrows, and tragedies of their lives and have a way of processing and digesting them. Both Jung and the Buddhists teach that we all are interconnected and that what we suppose is out there—our

opposite—is instead, for good or ill, inside ourselves and can be processed daily on an intimate personal level. What we think and feel and do affects the world.

This is a personal book written out of inner necessity. As such, I imagine and trust that it will be of some use to readers who have a similar need to make sense of their lives and find more healing alternatives than they have been offered. My purpose, through interweaving personal experience with theory, some history, and some clinical examples, is not to be all-inclusive. Instead, I plan to tell you stories about the ways in which a few people found and made use of what helped them.

In Chapter 1, I explore images of the feminine that encircle, and sometimes constrain, people who grew up in the second third of the twentieth century and how those images and expectations affected me. This is not an autobiography but comes from cherishing theory when it is made more real through personal anecdotes and stories. Thus, Chapter 1 contains not only what women were taught about themselves during the twentieth century but also how it affected one person, wounded her, even, and what she tried to do about it.

As a Jungian analyst, I also consider Jung's work and some of the dreams and visions that lie behind the theory that motivates my practice. I do this for what they indicate about Jung and analytical psychology and for what they still hold of the repressed mother tongue that can now, perhaps, return to consciousness in a creative and healing way.

I start Chapter 1 with images of a snake and a blind woman from one of the first visions that Jung conjured during his self-analysis. His reactions to these figures echo our cultural anxiety. They indicate the ways in which our inherited views of the feminine kept a powerfully chthonic aspect of the feminine in snake form and kept the anima, or feminine potential, undeveloped and silent in the form of a blind young woman. As women have joined the discourse, all of us, men and women alike, have had a chance to examine and reclaim ourselves and to become more comfortable with the feminine part of our natures. Partly thanks to Jung, we have moved away from his initial distrust of the feminine and can more consciously embrace the



fierce power of the Old Woman and hear what she has to teach us. She represents an archetypal image emerging more and more strongly in people's psyches today. Through reclaiming this archetypal image, we revalue feminine strength and its images of fierce compassion, along with its chthonic and spiritual power.

In Chapter 2, I travel far afield to explore nourishing images of the powerful, archetypal or divine, feminine that I searched out in Tibet and Nepal. The chapter contains stories about these images, how they came to be, and how I found and reclaimed them as part of my ancient feminine lineage. My purpose is to revivify our image of the feminine by presenting some of what I found: models of the Old Woman, of the fierce yet compassionate feminine, that are sacred yet fully embodied. These representations allow us to reimage the feminine and the Mother archetype to include its fullness and complexity, including many attributes our culture has suppressed, termed evil, or split into various segments or part-selves.

This is perhaps my favorite chapter and is the center of the book, because it brings the fierce and wise feminine voice, body, and teachings back into Western dialogue. I discovered that the matriarchal connected voice had not been lost in Tibetan and Nepalese Buddhism. Instead, images, stories, and teachings from the mother tongue survived and flourished side by side with the never completely victorious patriarchy. What delights me in these images of fierce compassion is that (as with the Christian Black Madonna) they attract and can be embraced by men and women alike. Vibrant, powerful, and compelling, their forceful yet caring energy helps us take our place within the present world in active, effective ways.

Our psyche hungers for a more complete image of the feminine and of women than I present in Chapter 1. Both men and women yearn for a more complete feminine archetypal image of the Self and the Divine that is also embodied and down to earth. This form is slowly making itself visible, often in poetry, but also through the feminine images recovered from India, Tibet, and Nepal by Western, primarily female, Buddhists. The image of the Old Woman appears increasingly as a profound reality inhabiting the dreams and psyches of my patients today.

In Chapter 3, I attempt to integrate these models of the Old Woman's fierce knowledge and compassionate power with a theory of cherishment. I aim to demonstrate how her influence shapes and changes both therapy and one's relation to the world. I emphasize growth through reclaiming feminine potency in both men and women. Her wisdom challenges the Western ideal of greater and greater individualistic autonomy. In contrast to this self-sufficing ideal, I emphasize the importance of the connections we create with each other and with the world. Including the Old Woman—the archetypal fierce, transformative, and loving feminine—in our lives in this way brings new and healing meaning to this mutuality. It also ameliorates much of the antivital psychology that is the content of Chapter 1.

In Chapter 3, I start with a dream image of a therapist as a mother panther fiercely grooming and caring for her cub (the analysand). From there, I trace a Motherline of therapists (male and female) and formulate a theory of cherishment that comes from these therapists' loving containment of all aspects of their patients. This theory stems from the Old Woman's stance, in which the shadow and feelings are valued as much as consciousness and rationality; in which attention is paid to the body, the unspoken, the interconnections, and the shared fields of therapist and patient. This chapter owes much to attachment theory and the understanding, now backed by neurological findings, that ruptures in the early mother-infant bond can be healed in analysis, even in adulthood, through the repeated experience of emotional consistency and empathy. What pleases me, and what I find so important about the theory, is that it adds the mother tongue of nurturing, connectedness, and containment to a way of doing therapy and being in the world. It values feeling as much as rationality and brings new life and *jouissance* to what, without the Old Woman, was becoming a dry and impersonal way of treating people.

In Chapter 4, I present an example from my practice of what a cherishing form of therapy might look like. I give a brief picture of part of a middle-aged man's therapy during which he came to recover his own feminine nature, a nature that was powerfully alive and neither inferior nor superior to his strong masculine one. I focus on this one man and his dreams in order to demonstrate the part played

by the Old Woman and her Daughter in the development of a man's anima and psyche. I also chose this patient because, though his analysis ended many years ago, I had neither stored nor disposed of his dreams but, rather inexplicably, found them in my current files. In reviewing them, I was reminded of their vivid depiction of the development of the feminine in a man. I wonder, also, if they had not stayed ready at hand because they, too, may have been waiting to be of use. I hope this book finds a good home for them. My work with him conveys the alchemical working of the unconscious in analysis that can occur when both parties enter into it as openly and honestly as they can. There, bounded within empathic connection, both experience the preverbal, mythopoeic mother world where old defensive habits can fall away, old wounds can heal, and, through both struggle and deep interconnectedness, where therapist and patient alike can change, gain, and grow.

A series of dreams I had the night before I was about to start writing this book may give you its essence in a mythopoeic form. The dreams expressed what I planned to write but used symbols and helpful images that amplified and enriched my rational ideas. The dreams had three parts.

First, I am at an international meeting of Jungian analysts at a round table with some women who seem from another era; they are ample women in 1930's sprigged summer dresses, hats, and white gloves. Barbara Hannah, a core member of the original group that gathered around Jung, is one of them. She was one of the most faithful of his followers and played a prominent, sometimes outspoken, part in almost all of Jung's lecture series. She also did much valuable research for him. Besides writing and teaching about the animus and about the technique of Active Imagination, Hannah was one of the first Jungian analysts in her own right, and Jung often referred patients to her. In the dream, it pleases me to be with these women, and I am both touched and surprised when they inquire about my work and tell me they are glad I am doing it. They get up, we hug good-bye, and they leave. Barbara Hannah returns a little later with a sheaf of papers in her hand. They had been sitting for years, she tells me, in a

compost heap. She thinks they will be useful in my work. The table then fills with young women. I open a drawer in a small chest I own that is made from aged, dark, Far Eastern wood. I offer them the sliced red and white cabbage, fresh and crisp like coleslaw, that is in it. The seasoning comes from the fragrance of the wood.

In the second dream, I look for a bathroom and find an airy marble one that delights me. It is feminine but ancient and elegant. What draws my attention are the crystal bottles, the old porcelain and earthenware jars of perfumes, lotions, unguents, and aromatic oils. I open this one, then that one, taking time to breathe in each of them. The ones that draw me most are ages-old and filled with spices whose names I do not even know. They remind me of scents I may have never smelled but that resonate deep within me and that I recognize in my very marrow.

The last dream is closer to consciousness. It may seem at first to have nothing to do with the others but, on reflection, also contains and amplifies a central theme (which is developed in the last chapter of this book). In it, Kobe Bryant—the brilliant basketball player who has had a troubling personal life—is pensive and morose. He spends a lot of time helping me fold up the heavy sheeting that covers the contents of this room. He tags after me like some large, thoroughbred dog whose sunny world has suddenly turned dark and ominous.

I am then driving my red convertible (not my real car) with him beside me in the passenger seat. We meet up with a silver convertible driven by a young woman about Bryant's age. The woman and I maneuver our cars so that we stop side by side, tail to head. She has her two children in the car. It is a meeting of great importance to us all. Bryant's dark mood lifts as he part crawls, part jumps into the back seat of her car. The children leap all over him, everyone overjoyed. The little girl has her arms around his neck, the boy in his lap gives him a bear hug. I sigh as if some essential task has been accomplished and say to myself as I look at them, "Yes, that's it."

The chapters of this book will follow the outline of the dreams. My aim, first, will be to look back at the views of the feminine in Jung's time and attempt to decipher the papers Barbara Hannah brought

me from time's compost heap. Chapter 1, as I said, mixes history, what was taught about the feminine, with personal experience. I am not trying to be comprehensive but to convey a sense of how many of us learned to view ourselves and what we gained, or lost, thereby.

Then, exploring the marble bathroom, in Chapter 2, I recall and reimage some ancient aspects of the feminine that, until very recently, were discarded, ignored, or seen only as negative. What I hope to convey is the primordial potency of the Mother archetype and reclaim the value of her fierceness. Reimagining her revivifies her many sides, united in herself. She is the energy that grounds, supports, and shines through the Old Woman and her Daughter and that, in my practice, I find reemerging in now one person, then another, first in dreams and meditative images, then as each discovers a different and fuller way of being in the world. This feminine journey (for both men and women) has forced many of us to make a descent, search out, and then uncover and decipher the contemporary meaning of images that first arose long before our current era. It is a going back to a source, a reclaiming of a birthright that our bodies and our psyches recognize even if our culture, until recently, suppressed it. This return to the mothers, to sit at their feet and learn what we have forgotten, is the life source and heart of this book.

I owe a great debt to my psychoanalytic father and teacher, Carl Jung, who first opened this realm through his writings. Jung wrote about the realm of archetypes and the importance of them for the psyche. He spent many of his teaching seminars exploring these images and then following them in personal analysis.<sup>3</sup>

Chapter 3 gives words to the dream image of the red and white cabbage from the fragrant drawer that I give to the women in the dream. Red and white are alchemical colors representing sun and moon, the union of masculine and feminine. In Vedic Indian symbology, they are the colors of two of the main energy channels, or *nadis*, that rise and twine around each other and circle the chakras near the spine in the subtle body. *Pingala* is the name of the red solar *nadi* that warms, stimulates, and helps extraversion and action in the world, while *ida* is cool, moist, lunar, introspective, and quietly nurturing. *Pingala* is seen as a traditionally masculine energy while *ida* is a traditionally

feminine one. Both need to balance and harmonize for a person to be physically and spiritually strong.

I have found that red and white are also the colors that often appear together in women's dreams when they are exploring their sense of what it is to be a woman. Here, red is associated with blood—menstrual and generative blood—as well as with feeling, creativity, anger, fire, and desire. White, alchemically, represents the planet Mercury and thus is an alternative for silver. White is the traditional color for the Great Goddess and may indicate her arrival in the psyche, though both the men and the women I work with tend to associate white more with illumination, simplicity, a kind of regal majesty (the White Queen in contrast to the Red King), and also the spirit (purity and divine aspiration) and death.

White cabbage leaves are really a pale green white—here the green symbolizing nature and the alchemical greening where things have time to grow and change—good, fertile colors. The cabbage itself is a lovely common plant: hardy, easy to grow, and, when home grown, of a delicious flavor and very high in vitamin C. My home health books credit it as a protection against breast cancer, and its juice as a help in healing stomach ulcers. Its unfolding form reminds one of pregnancy; in fact, the old wives' answer to children's questions about birth is, "I found you under a cabbage." In French it is a term of endearment: "Mon petit chou"—my little cabbage. Dictionaries of symbols connect it with profit and gain and define it as emblematic of self-determination: a self-will that can transform into a sense of "I," an "I" who has the right to claim its place in the world and to feel and think for itself and then take action or not, as the self sees fit.

The fragrant drawer protects and preserves, as does an analyst's room, where one can be cherished, nourished, helped to heal, and allowed to find, reclaim, and expand one's nature. The drawer's dark, possibly ebony, wood brings the third important alchemical color into play: black. Black can represent the dark and shadowy side of things, which is just as much part of ourselves as the light. It can represent nighttime and dark caves, places of retreat, the darkness beneath the ground, where things rest and germinate. Or it can represent the blackness of moods and depressions that, if attended, can help incu-

bate a needed change. Black also stands for the dark side—the Black Goddess side—of the Tibetan and Indian deities of Chapter 2, which Judeo-Christianity (not to speak of the Muslim world) has primarily rejected as evil (though honoring the Black Madonna reclaims some of the dark feminine’s archetypal energy for Christianity, as, for example, Ean Begg, Fred Gustafson, and China Galland have noted).<sup>4</sup> When consciously mediated and respectfully addressed, this heretofore shadow side of the feminine emerges as a source of strength and healing that contains many people today.

Chapter 4 marks a coming together and a reunion of the masculine with the feminine, both internally and externally. It demonstrates a move toward balanced relationships between men, women, and their children. In my dream, the red car of feeling, driven by a Crone, helps Bryant function as a helpful animus—jumping into the car—after allowing himself to be of use to the Old Woman. The Old Woman (as anima) drives her red car to help the young man come into and regain what he seems to lack or to have lost. Once in the silver car of potential transformation, he can express his feelings rather than being cut off and at the whim of moods. The psyche’s use of Kobe Bryant as an image of the masculine today could not be more dynamic, for Bryant appears as a hero in our modern coliseums. He has the male gifts of aggression, athletic brilliance, individualism, intelligence, skill, and cooperation. He knows what he wants in the world and works hard to obtain it. Bryant has made his way radiantly in the sports world and displays the animal grace of an Adonis. Yet his relationship to the feminine, both inner and outer, seems dubious and wounded. None of the wisdom of the Old Woman and her Daughter seems to be available to instruct him in his dealings with his teammates’ feelings or with the feminine.

Bryant’s moods and tears may be a sign of the feminine stirring within him, as are his emotions when winning and losing and the way he and his teammates—at least during the time they were meditating and doing yoga with their coach—once helped and supported each other. This is progress from the tight-lipped, buttoned-down, repressed gladiators of a few years ago; however, groupies, cheerleaders, and troubled, unmothered women seem to be the only feminine energy with which our culture surrounds him. These are girls who are

all too ready to sacrifice themselves in idolatry of their latest Adonis and to become his passive and acquiescent doormats or, if their fantasies are plundered, to turn on him and try to tear him apart. Kobe Bryant, surrounded by this all-too-prevalent, unformed, and wounded feminine energy, has little chance of developing a mature relationship with his own outer and inner feminine figures. As such, he is a good representation of how men (such as the man I write about in Chapter 4) suffer by being brought up so one-sidedly. Men, as well as women, lack experience of the Old Woman's wisdom and what she has to teach them. So many men today have had little, if any, chance or example of how to be with mature women or how to cultivate a mature and related inner feminine, or anima.

This book is written for men as well as women. As I write of the feminine, men can consider their anima—their inner feminine—as well as the women in their lives. They can consider the possibility of new kinds of feminine guides who may be appearing in the outer world and in their dreams. We all benefit from examining ourselves and discovering our particular inner feminine essence, which needs developing and needs a better relationship with us and a more extraverted acceptance. I am suggesting that the feminine needs the same sort of mothering and cherishing that so many young fathers are now giving to their children. The mother in my dream is driving her children in her silver car and aiming for a reunion with Bryant. She is not a temptress, or a black snake demon, or a wounded, neurotic maiden, or an enchanting, airy sprite; no more is she a terrible mother, or a woman to be hated or ignored. She is the driver of the lunar, transformative, silver car: a man's lover, wife, and the mother of his children. The little girl in the dream, needing as much love and attention from him as his inner boy, so safe in his lap, his little arms in a bear hug around him, flings her arms around Bryant's neck. There is a healing that comes from being, and paying attention to, all that is within us and striving for relationship with all aspects of ourselves. Just like Kobe Bryant in my dream, all men and women can develop their feeling, loving, related sides—whether this manifests in masculine, feminine, or gender-free ways—as well as being graceful in the world.





## CHAPTER 1

# *The Black Serpent and the Beautiful Young Girl*

## Inherited Views of the Feminine

I'm nobody! Who are you?  
Then there's a pair of us—don't tell  
Are you nobody, too?  
They'd banish us, you know.  
—Emily Dickinson

The title of this chapter comes from an Active Imagination or vision that Jung recounts in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. In the Active Imagination or vision, Jung sees a wise old man whom he trusts, and then he sees a blind but beautiful young girl and a snake, both of whom raise his suspicions. Of the girl, Jung says, “I was distinctly suspicious.”<sup>1</sup>

Jung's reaction recalls our inherited cultural anxiety about the feminine. People of Jung's era often found themselves ignorant of, or ill at ease with, feminine nature. Their perceptions, like ours, tended to overvalue, undervalue, or distrust the feminine and muddled their outlook with projections. As women have entered the discourse and, partly thanks to innovators like Jung, have had a chance to examine

and to reclaim themselves, men and women alike are growing more comfortable with the feminine part of their nature and valuing it more highly. I will return to the figures of the snake and the girl at the close of this chapter but will start by exploring our inherited views of the feminine and how they are mirrored in the personal experience and education of a woman growing up during the twentieth century.

As a young mother in the mid-1950s, when I first became interested in psychology, and later, when I was in training, I often found what I read or was taught about the feminine limiting, oppressive even, and so alien that it made me ashamed to be a woman. I had been taught to accept what the scientists and experts told me and took them for my guides. I knew nothing then of the archetypal Old Woman's wisdom. Most older women I knew still acted girlish and often discounted women, themselves included, as devious (snakelike) or blindly emotional. They lacked confidence in themselves and had an ambivalent relationship, at best, with their authority. What authority they wielded often came more from an off-putting, know-it-all, and vehement bossiness—what Jung calls the negative animus.

This bossiness was, nonetheless, a step toward reclaiming some power, but definitely nothing I could use as a guide. From what the experts described, or even from women's magazines, it was impossible to gain a sense of how to be an adult female, much less a mother. I soon turned to books on animal behavior instead, not of laboratory animals but observations of animals in the wild. In my studies as a special student in ethology at Dartmouth College (special because I was a woman, and women had no formal standing there at that time), I had a chance to spend many hours observing beaver colonies in our local ponds or watching families of river otters. I took a great interest, as well, in others' field studies of wolves, which seemed—male and female alike—expert in mothering and nurturing their young.

The options presented to a woman in the middle of the twentieth century were amazingly limited. Rather than straying too far from my subject, a Louise Bogan poem of that era (from a collection that I inherited from my mother) captures the way women internalized what they were taught about themselves:

## WOMEN

*Women have no wilderness in them,  
They are provident instead,  
Content in the tight hot cell of their hearts  
To eat dusty bread.*

*They do not see cattle cropping red winter grass,  
They do not hear  
Snow water going down under culverts  
Shallow and clear.*

*They wait, when they should turn to journeys,  
They stiffen, when they should bend.  
They use against themselves that benevolence  
To which no man is friend.*

*They cannot think of so many crops to a field  
Or of clean wood cleft by an axe.  
Their love is an eager meaninglessness  
Too tense, or too lax.*

*They hear in every whisper that speaks to them  
A shout and a cry.  
As like as not, when they take life over their door-sills  
They should let it go by.<sup>2</sup>*

This “tight hot cell of their hearts” reminds me of a cage and the way many of our grandmothers, great-grandmothers, and great-great-grandmothers were encaged. I have no inclination to travel to medieval times or before, or to recall the teachings of the early Christian church fathers, Jewish rabbis, or Islamic imams on the “natural” deficiencies of women, or to review the sometimes-tragic worldwide limitations placed on women and their slow and often-painful struggles to surmount them. Religions centered on a father god, and social policies created and enforced by men, justified and reinforced the subjugation of women. Women came to be considered morally

inferior to men and dependent on them. With the exception of a few indigenous cultures, it has been a long road to even imagining a time when women would be as free as men.

This is partly due to the patriarchy itself and its system of hierarchy, violence, and control. For ages, Western civilization ignored, subjugated, romanticized, or demonized the other—anyone who was not white, male, and of a certain class. Charles Darwin, for example, wrote, “It is generally admitted that with women the powers of intuition, of rapid perception, and perhaps of imitation, are more strongly marked than in man; but some, at least, of these faculties are characteristic of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilization.”<sup>3</sup>

Western civilization, in its development, repressed all in itself that it considered unmanly. Perhaps as a consequence of what it denied itself, it then created fantastic projections onto this alien other.<sup>4</sup> As a white, highly educated female, my interest is in women’s experience of being treated as other, though equally cogent discourse could be made about any of the other supposedly “lower races.” Part of my concern comes from what I see and have learned from my patients, but part is also a desire to learn more about myself and my history. This chapter, therefore, starts with a brief overview of views of feminine nature we have inherited from our forefathers (and, rarely, our foremothers). It is brief for three reasons: the constraints of time and space; the fact that there are already many studies that cover this subject;<sup>5</sup> and because I am more interested in recovering less-pathological and more-hopeful views of the feminine than those with which I was brought up and educated.

In about the mid-nineteenth century, emerging from the rigidity of centuries of patriarchy, some intellectuals at the forefront of romantic philosophy started to concern themselves with the study of that unknown and fascinatingly mysterious other, even if their view was clouded by the thick lens of unexamined projections and of romanticism itself. James Hillman refers to this as a search not for the disallowed feminine—which is the sense I make of it—but for lost gods: “These depths were projected as we now say into the remote

past, into mythology, into foreign dark tribes and exotic customs, into the simple folk and their lore and into the mentally alienated.”<sup>6</sup>

Rather than as naturally sinful and inferior, women at this time started to be seen as the opposite of the rational male mysterious to some, wiltingly fragile to others, more noble and virtuous than men, uninterested in sex, darkly sensual and alluring, or as “the angel in the house” and “the guardian of the race.”<sup>7</sup> Whatever was proclaimed about her, this other was rarely viewed with an objective eye. In 1869, however, John Stuart Mill examined what he observed of the character of women of his own social class, who were mostly kept at home, barely educated, and not allowed meaningful work; he also examined his contemporaries’ projections on women. Mill found the behavior ascribed to women not innate but a product of their treatment and conditioning—what happened to them in the hot cells of their cages. My 1990 book, *The Woman in the Mirror*, deals with this subject in some depth. In it, I quote a passage from Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* that is too apt not to quote again:

In the case of women, a hothouse and stove cultivation has always been carried on of some of the capabilities of their nature, for the benefit and pleasure of their masters. Then, because certain products of the general vital force sprout luxuriantly and reach a great development in this heated atmosphere and under this active nurture and watering, while other shoots from the same root, which are left outside in the wintery air, with ice purposely heaped all round them, have a stunted growth, and some are burnt off with fire and disappear; men, with their inability to recognize their own work . . . believe that the tree grows itself in the way they have made it grow, and that it would die if one half were not kept in the vapor bath and the other half in the snow.<sup>8</sup>

The views we have inherited about feminine nature, as well as about masculine nature, merit reappraisal. Is, for instance, a particular description of the feminine something essential to woman’s nature, or

is it, rather, a construction made by our “vapor baths” and “snow”? Thus, when looking at our foremothers’ and forefathers’ views of the feminine, we need to check for the prejudices and blind spots of their time as well as for the prejudices and blind spots of our own.

Science itself perhaps held one of the more-clouded views. Ehrenreich and English in their overview, *For Her Own Good*, describe the medicalization of the “woman question.” Progress, the scientific fight against disease, licensing, and laws of practice doubtlessly improved health, longevity, and the quality of life—at least for those with access to medical care. But, Ehrenreich and English argue, sexual romanticism in regard to women often got disguised as science. At the same time, especially in the United States, a masculine, mechanistic viewpoint considered humans similar to machines that, therefore, needed rational schedules and programming. Under the name of progress, all of this conspired to take medicine out of women’s hands but also mandated the correct way for a woman to mother her children. An untoward side effect of this medicalization and its authoritative voice often deprived women, especially mothers, of self-confidence, autonomy, and trust in their own bodies and in their ability to function fully and well. John Watson, the eminent Harvard behaviorist, for example, was advising mothers in 1928 that

there is a sensible way of treating children. Treat them as though they were young adults. Dress them, bathe them with care and circumspection. Let your behavior always be objective and kindly firm. Never hug or kiss them, never let them sit on your lap. If you must, kiss them on the forehead when they say good-night. Shake hands with them in the morning . . . Mothers just don’t know [that] when they kiss their children and pick them up and rock them, caress them and jiggle them upon their knee, they are slowly building a human being totally unable to cope with the world it must later live in.<sup>9</sup>

The lack of trust in our natural common sense that has been a by-product of advice such as this haunts us still. Women no longer have the Old Woman’s wisdom and the lore of the folk healers, granny

women, and midwives who once served as healers and advisors. These positive role models were discarded as primitive and shamefully ignorant. Great progress was made in the growing sophistication of medicine and its ability to save lives, but, in the process, the old native wisdom was lost. We ceded our wisdom to the experts' theories about human behavior, which, bizarre as they may seem today, needed to be followed.

In the psychology of the first half of the twentieth century, Freud taught that women were defective males, and Helene Deutsch promoted "natural" masochism, women's passivity and narcissism, and taught that a woman, after she was thirty or so, really had no place or standing biologically or culturally.<sup>10</sup> A woman's depression or psychological malaise was treated by the physicians of the day by encouraging her essential womanly nature and by keeping her from exciting her mind in a world considered too large for her. Thus, for example, the physician who treated the intellectual, curious, and greatly gifted Virginia Woolf in the 1930s for depression ordered her to leave the "over stimulation" of the London she loved and, instead, to repair to the country where she was put to bed in a darkened room, no books or writing allowed, and ordered to be fattened with butter, milk, and pastries.<sup>11</sup>

About twenty years later in the United States, a thinking woman was still a problem to some in the medical profession. I experienced this in a deeply troubling way when, pregnant with my first child, an essential part of me was made to seem unwomanly and cursed, needing, perhaps, to be left to wither in the snow. An obstetrician at the prestigious teaching hospital in Hanover, New Hampshire, asked me, in our initial interview, about my personal history. He looked at me askance when I told him I had gone to Radcliffe (class of 1955). I wondered why. Later in the visit, it came out that he was concerned that, biologically for a woman, too much energy, or blood, was going to my brain. Thinking exercised it too much, he told me, and deprived my womb and thereby put my baby at risk. I would be in danger of miscarrying or not being able to give birth naturally. He, along with Woolf's physician, was seeing something pathological and stressful in women's using their brains. Instead, even in the middle decade of

the twentieth century, he and many others still advocated leaving that part of women's anatomy undeveloped, out in the snow, while cultivating more feminine qualities of nought and repose, which, presumably, would better feed the womb.

Part of my very slow progress toward the Old Woman perhaps started with my refusing to go to this doctor and at least investigating natural childbirth, though I was far from claiming my own authority. However, and more vital to my well-being or lack thereof, I not only felt something was wrong with what I was hearing from the authorities, but, far more painfully, I also felt I was deeply flawed and wrong for not being able to accept them.

Clarissa Pinkola Estés writes about similar views of women half a generation or so later: "My own post-World War II generation grew up in a time when women were infantilized and treated as property . . . It was a time when parents who abused their children were simply called 'strict,' when the spiritual lacerations of profoundly exploited women were referred to as 'nervous breakdowns,' when girls and women who were tightly girdled, tightly reined, and tightly muzzled were called 'nice,' and those other females who managed to slip the collar for a moment were branded 'bad.'"<sup>12</sup>

Somehow, my aberrant views, though I felt impelled to follow them, also made me feel "bad" or at least on unsure ground and neither nice nor obliging. Other experts besides my doctor, such as Bruno Bettelheim,<sup>13</sup> sustained the psychoanalytical distrust of women, especially mothers, whether intellectuals or not. Mothering became pathological, and "instinctual mothering" (which drew me to the animals I watched) suspect, to be replaced by child experts and other educated and scientific authorities.

Starting in the 1950s, the term "mother complex" came into common usage. In the field of psychology, its negative connotation held a similar place to that of the wicked "stepmother" in myth and folklore. Many of the baby books were written by experts who mistrusted mothers and taught schedules rather than the possibility of the mother-child bond. (May I remind you of John Watson's heir, the behaviorist B. F. Skinner, whose theories were then in vogue, and the Skinner box, to which it was said he consigned his daughter in a



prime example of scientific child rearing and, parenthetically, to keep her free from her mother's emotional influence.)

There is always a secret countermovement of rebels, if one looks hard enough—people who hold the seed for a more-balanced way of being in the world than what they have been taught. I did not consider myself one of these, alas, but I did follow a rebel as best I could. I will always be grateful that I had the support and wisdom of a woman, older than me, who had her babies rather late in life. Her Old Woman's wisdom helped me navigate a path that was somewhat free from the Experts' control. With her backing, I soon forsook the authorities' books (except one about relaxation in labor) and had as natural a childbirth as was possible in a university hospital. Then, with my friend's encouragement, I started, hesitant and uncertain, to rely on the intimate, nonverbal communication that took place between my babies and me. I nursed both for eight months to a year, though breast-feeding was considered contrary to hygiene and schedules then and was looked on as primitive and backward. It was discouraged in hospitals by the notorious three- to four-hour "bringing out of the babies" to their mothers from the nursery. I suffered and then rebelled against the pain inflicted on both my infant daughter and me as I watched powerlessly for days and sleepless nights as she howled, disconsolate, unfed, and uncomforted, in her sterile bassinet behind the hospital nursery window and then fell asleep in my arms too wrought up to nurse at the appointed time. What a torturous way for an infant to first meet the world!

When I got pregnant again, I was unwilling to put either my baby or myself through this, to me, unnatural and damaging suffering. I went to a smaller, less-prestigious hospital where I could insist on keeping my second baby with me in my room. My doctor was a friend of my husband's and liked what I was doing; however, the staff thought otherwise, so we were put in quarantine, and my son was branded "a dirty baby" as he was in intimate contact with me rather than with the nurses. Being considered a freak was a small price to pay for the comfort my son and I got from our closeness and our availability to each other. It gave a natural ease to his entrance into the world in contrast to my daughter's tumultuous and probably terrifying one. As they

grew, I was continually rewarded by the close attention I was paying to what my children's little bodies were saying, and this confirmed my choice. I also learned by watching animals and the ease and fierceness of their mothering.

In my education, in reading case histories or, later, in presenting my own patients in case conferences, the first and primary interest in tracing pathology rested on the mother figure rather than on the patient. René Spitz and his theories were core reading and still influence psychology.<sup>14</sup> He studied many varieties of "bad" mothers and, in fact, traced all infantile disturbances to specific deficits in the mother's personality (a stand that the *New England Journal of Medicine* started to question in the 1970s as unreliable at best). In the psychoanalytical study of the day, it was the mother who drew the lion's share of interpretations of why and how general development failed or why one or the other symptom appeared, even to Bettelheim's notion of schizophrenia being caused not by some tragic genetic or biological miscalculation but by a schizophrenogenic mother.

Alas, I had not read Jung then and so missed his brilliant apprehension that, though he insisted it was necessary to study the parent to understand what might be going wrong in the child, the child was affected as much, if not more, by impersonal, archetypal images of the parent as by the personal one. He noted that the archetypal Terrible Mother and her horrors all too often were erroneously projected onto the individual mother. In 1938 (revised in 1954), Jung wrote that

all those influences which the literature describes as being exerted on the children do not come from the mother herself, but rather from the archetype projected upon her, which gives her a mythological background and invests her with authority and numinosity. The aetiological and traumatic effects produced by the mother must be divided into two groups: (1) those corresponding to traits of character and attitudes actually present in the mother, and (2) those referring to traits which the mother only seems to possess, the reality being composed of more or less fantastic (i.e., archetypal) projections on the part of the child.<sup>15</sup>

• • •

And, I would add, from the projections the authorities, and society at large, also placed on her.

But let me return to the quandary in which many women found themselves when faced with the scientific authority who was interpreting women's and mothers' psychology. It was impossible, then, not to feel and internalize the guilt that, it sometimes seemed, came along with being a woman. Guilty of what? "Guilty of everything, every time: of having desires, of not having any; of being frigid; of being 'too' hot; of not being both at once; of being too much of a mother and not enough; of nurturing and not nurturing."<sup>16</sup>

Let me return to the quandary in which many women found themselves when faced with the scientific authority who was interpreting women's, and especially mothers,' psychology. In the mid-1950s and the 1960s, archetypes being a foreign country in my world, the "good" mother was seen to be as threatening to the individual development of the child as was the "bad" mother. An example from my son's medical record in the early 1960s may make this clearer. His usual pediatrician being absent, I brought my inquisitive, talkative three-year-old, who was bothered with a rash, to see a substitute—a young doctor who was headed, he told me, for a career in psychiatry. He did not note the rash or treatment in the record but did note my consideration of my son and his and my occasional give-and-take. I quote: "Mother over involved with child: keeps paying attention to him and includes him in the discussion." There was then no knowledge of the blessed Winnicottian idea of the "good enough mother" doing the best she could.<sup>17</sup> Instead, if good, she had to be bad, because her love and attention would, as the young doctor clearly assumed, flood the child and deprive him or her of a sense of disciplined containment. Of course, the tide turned and, thanks in part to Dr. Benjamin Spock,<sup>18</sup> permissiveness became the mother's new requirement. And then the Dionysianly free, uncontained child who took the mid-century child's place could later lay all his or her pain at the feet of the mother's laxness and bemoan the lack of containment.

I am not stating here that there are no bad parents, or that a child's problems are never the mother's fault. Far from it; I am claiming only

that we need to listen or do our therapy with an ear that also hears the immense power unconsciously projected onto the mother as the carrier of the Mother archetype and the heavy shadow projections often placed on her. We need to know what expert the mother is trying to follow. We need to avoid holding the personal mother to blame for all of a child's disequilibrium and avoid making her feel guilty for everything that goes wrong in her family's or her child's life. She is simply the closest thing we have to the Great Mother in all her many life-giving and destructive forms. For now, as it was then, the language of the wounded child on the way to recovery needs someone and something to blame: the personal mother serves all too well.

The opposites seemed much farther apart in the 1950s or the 1960s than they do today. Then, one's clinical work was to help a patient see that what she or he thought was a good mother was really at the source of her or his pain. Because our patients, as well as we ourselves are at such varying stages of development both culturally and clinically, we often cannot see the forest for the trees. One of Jung's greatest efforts was his attempt to disidentify the personal from the archetypal. He helped differentiate ideal, pure images of the "good" mother and the "bad" mother from the personal by looking for the archetypal, supra-personal images of the mother and the feminine that live in projection in religion, myths, fairy tales, customs, and taboos. His integration of archetypal theory with his insights into personal psychology gives analytical psychology both depth and potency. It also leads us into a far deeper understanding of the intricacies of the mother complex.

Jung perceived far more in the feminine than was commonly seen. He held a far wider and less-dismissive view than his peers, partly because of his interest in women's psychology and partly because of his interest in and his study of archetypal feminine images. Many therapists in Jung's time, and still, blame the mother for archetypal contents as if they were the mother's personal doing rather than the child's fantasy. Of course, the two are often mixed, but it was Jung's genius not to heap everything onto the personal mother's or the individual woman's back. This may have been a major source of his immense popularity with women and why he drew them to him as

patients, students, and analysts. Both Jung's interest in the feminine and his theories about the feminine felt far more open and expansive and less belittling (encaging) than his contemporaries. What follows is a discussion of Jung's views as expressed in *Symbols of Transformation* and "Psychological Aspects of the Kore."<sup>19</sup>

*Jung and the Feminine in Symbols of Transformation  
and "Psychological Aspects of the Kore"*

In *Symbols of Transformation* and "Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype," Jung analyzes, organizes, and gives structure and multidimensionality to the feminine that Freud and Deutsch and their followers too easily dismissed. Jung first investigates this area in part 2 of *Symbols of Transformation*, where he segues from an in-depth discussion of the hero to archetypal symbols of the mother and rebirth to the hero's battle for deliverance from the mother. This work is dense with historical and mythological allusions. A major thread running through the text connects Jung's thinking with a philosophical position that structures the development of the human psyche as an unfolding from a matriarchal prehistoric state to a patriarchal rise of consciousness. In this higher stage, the masculine principle dominates through its opposition to, and overthrowing of, the matriarchy (seen as regressive, chaotic instinctuality). Jung describes this domination as occurring as the patriarchal hero develops in consciousness and ego power through various battles with the matriarchal monster, serpent, or dragon. In essence, the hero, along with the culture at large, turns his back on the feminine, as well as on intuition and feeling, in favor of an ordered masculine and rational consciousness.

Jung demonstrates this developmental trend through his analysis of the mythic journey in *Symbols of Transformation*, where he describes the dual mother trying, snakelike, to pull the hero back into the unconscious. Jung does not blame the archetypal mother for this, as he sees, perhaps from his own experience, that the hero, or individual person, desires to fall back into the arms of the mother and to regress to the shelter of her arms or into matriarchal unconsciousness.

Jung's portrayal of the archetypes of the dual mother—sometimes

loving, sometimes terrible—makes for some of the most compelling and powerful segments in the book. But he does not leave the feminine stuck in this primitive state. Jung intimates that the feminine is not simply regressive but can act in a forward-looking, consciousness-producing way. Here, she can appear as a beautiful anima figure in the masculine psyche or represent the feminine “who understands.”<sup>20</sup> She acts as the beloved who leads toward a possible union at a higher level. As such, she pulls the hero, through sacrifice, toward greater consciousness and evolutionary progress.

This stage of consciousness advances past the patriarchy to what E. C. Whitmont has called “the return of the Goddess” and what Erich Neumann and Jean Gebser call the Integral age.<sup>21</sup> This is the stage that will be the subject of the following chapters. It involves a growth not only in individual development but also in the culture at large. This growth involves a necessary return to the matriarchy in order to reclaim valuable elements that the patriarchy denied or suppressed (a return I will address in Chapter 2). The recovered treasure joins what is still of value in the patriarchy to produce greater individuation, harmony, and completeness (see Chapters 3 and 4).

But to return to Jung and our inherited views of the feminine. In *Symbols of Transformation*, Jung explores three of his most important theories. First, he delineates a deeper, unconscious level below Freud’s idea of the personal unconscious, and second, he demonstrates the existence of universal archaic images, or archetypes, and shows them to be the forms through which this unconscious level expresses itself. Third, Jung includes the Mother archetype as a symbol of transformation. He explores the key role of the matriarchy in developmental history, considering it psychologically more important than Freud’s world of the fathers and the warring brothers. Jung argues that the patriarchy developed out of the matriarchy (and, in turn, that the patriarchy leads to a possible synthesis of the two). He structures his ideas through analyzing an individual myth in a woman’s unconscious and then tracks her fantasy in relation to his theory. These ideas, as Jung develops them in *Symbols of Transformation*, mark his inevitable break with Freud, whose allegiance stayed with the world of the fathers and the sons and their internecine Oedipal battles.



*The Great Mother. Coso Indian petroglyph.  
Photograph by Daniel Bianchetta. Author's collection.*

In “Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype,” Jung further elucidates his ideas on the feminine. This article contains an evocative analysis of the personal and archetypal feminine psyche on which we can build. Jung’s emphasis seems to be on actual women, though he also cites archetypal images of the positive and negative mother and their influence on human behavior. Starting with the archetype of the Great Mother, Jung barely mentions some of her manifestations. This list, however, from the Virgin Mary to Kali to the Earth Mother (along with Sophia, Demeter, Isis, and Hecate), has left Jungians a rich field

to excavate. Besides these mythical archetypal figures, Jung includes animals such as the cow, the rabbit, the cat, the bear, the crocodile, the dragon, the salamander, and the snake that carry a feminine and mother identification. He mentions inanimate objects, such as images of wells and other containers, as also connected to the mother. Further evocative mother images are the cave, the vessel, the tree, flowers such as the rose or the lotus, and death images such as the coffin, the grave, and the underworld.

Jung goes on to examine the psychological effects of the mother archetype embodied in the psychology of women of his time. He covers both negative and positive Mother archetypes and discusses their impact on the mother-child relationship and how they help mold the child's sense of the world. As I mentioned earlier, the archetypes manifest both in the mother herself and through the child's own fantasy or projection. Jung is uncharacteristically brief on the Mother archetype's effect on the son: a positive mother complex can give him access to creativity, but it can also bind him to the mother and prevent him from taking his place in the mundane world. The negative mother complex in a son can lead to a hatred of women and the feminine, as well as to an enmeshment with an equally negative or devouring woman, or anima, figure, or *femme-inspiratrice*.<sup>22</sup> It can also lead to the development of patriarchal society through turning away from the unmanly feminine and cultivating the hard-working fathers' world of Science and Logos, which has, until recently, made the Western world so brilliantly successful.

Jung's delineation of the power of the Mother archetype in contemporary women and the effects of a mother complex on the daughter was groundbreaking. Jung drew on his own therapeutic experience to write about four ways daughters manifest the mother complex. He warns that these portrayals are distillations of the type rather than case material but that the negative aspects he stresses wound the woman and have pathological consequences.

First, in what Jung calls a "hypertrophy of the maternal element,"<sup>23</sup> a woman can get ensnared in the mother role in a blind instinctual morass that simply mothers and identifies with everything in her



care; her own personality and those of others are often ruthlessly annihilated. This is a stage, even today, that may be biologically necessary for an infant's survival and is one with which any new mother can identify. The mothering feels like an all-consuming imperative where the needs of the infant and small child seem to supersede, even engulf, all else in life. It is the way mother animals care for their young, but these animals know how to let go at the appropriate time. For a woman, the instinct turns negative only when she insists on continuing her engulfment and in clinging to her child's outgrown stage of development.

Jung sees the maternal woman from the outside as carrying the archetypal kind of good and loving mother everyone longs for:

This is the mother-love which is one of the most moving and unforgettable memories of our lives, the mysterious root of all growth and change; the love that means homecoming, shelter, and the long silence from which everyone begins and in which everything ends . . . Mother is mother-love, my experience and my secret. Why risk saying too much, too much that is false and inadequate and beside the point, about that human being who was our mother, the accidental carrier of that great experience which includes herself and myself and all mankind, and indeed the whole of created nature, the experience of life whose children we are?<sup>24</sup>

He concludes this romantic, yet heartfelt, paean to mothers with a plea to keep this archetypal image of the mother alive in one's psyche rather than letting it fall into the unconscious through rational, enlightened reasonableness.

Second, in an "overdevelopment of Eros," the maternal instinct is eradicated in favor of fierce erotic attachments to the father or to other women's husbands. The woman is ruled either by jealousy of her own mother or a will to power, or both, but is as unconscious as the first type. Jung, in discussing the positive aspects of this, states that it may be a life-saving reaction to an instinctive or devouringly maternal figure. The Eros-identified woman can cause a growth in consciousness

both in others and in herself. Her ability to disturb and stir up conflict overcomes instinctual matriarchal inertia; her becoming conscious of this “transforms her into a deliverer and redeemer.”<sup>25</sup>

This is a fairly common stage in a society in which the masculine is valued over the feminine. In contemporary life, the woman’s consciousness grows through projecting it onto one man, or a series of men, and she continues to live through them until she can reclaim her value.

Third, a woman can lose herself in identification with her mother, which then results in a “paralysis of the daughter’s feminine initiative.”<sup>26</sup> She has a marked sense of inferiority, is “sucked dry by her mother,”<sup>27</sup> has no separate life, and, again, is unconscious. On a positive note, Jung suggests that the woman can overcome this by having the “emptiness” she has acquired filled by some man’s “potent anima projection”; he metaphorically abducts her from the mother realm. Jung notes that positive growth may result if the woman plays the anima “role mapped out for her for a long time and with great effort, until she actually comes to loathe it.”<sup>28</sup> Only then can she give herself permission to finally develop her own natural gifts rather than, as in the “overdevelopment of Eros,” projecting them onto her husband or another man.

Fourth, resistance to the mother dominates. Here the negative mother complex becomes the guide for the daughter’s life. “Anything, so long as it is not like Mother!” is her motto.<sup>29</sup> The daughter is governed by an adamant opposition to everything the personal mother or the mother realm is, or represents. The intellect is developed and valued at the cost of instinct and the masculine at the cost of the feminine. In discussing the positive aspects of this, Jung focuses on the woman’s relationship with her husband and others. She makes a good friend and companion, and she is easier for a man to understand than the mother-identified types of women. If she can combine her traditionally masculine qualities with her womanliness, she can also be a spiritual and intellectual guide, thanks to her lucidity and cool intelligence. If she cannot, her life is organized around hating her mother and, often, hating the feminine in herself as well. This is the tragedy, even today, of those adolescent girls who despise their moth-

ers' often-subservient, or devalued, feminine role. In order to separate both from it and from their mothers, they flee into an animus-driven hardness and malelike sexuality that loses both their mothers' support, alas, and contact with their own instinctual energies. As adults, these are the women who can work sixteen or more hours a day and push themselves relentlessly, all the while wondering why they feel so unfulfilled.

Jung pondered the reasons why images of the feminine turned so hostile and negative in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century culture. The sense he made of it was that it was a reaction to the unreal idealization and sentimentality then prevalent. Both the idealization and the denigration caused the repressed power of the feminine to accumulate and to build up power in the unconscious. This power, repressed, turned hostile and destructive, as in the negative mother and the "anything but mother" daughter. Jung does not, as so many other primarily Freudian and object-relations theorists do, place the blame for the negative outcomes he discusses on the personal mother. Rather, he considers them a consequence of the stresses on the mother and a result of trying to make a human woman bear all the lopsided projections of idealization and fear that rightfully belong to the archetype. Jung considers the dark negative mother as an aspect of the feminine archetype whose image becomes exaggerated and baneful because of our sociocultural response to her. He acknowledges the necessity, through analysis, of exploring the dark, somewhat suspect, parts of the psyche and of our consciously absorbing and redeeming the negative through some accommodation to and acceptance of it.

Many of Jung's findings are congruent with developmental theories in the psychology of women that are still evolving. The positive aspects of a negative mother complex, which Jung first observes and describes here, have been verified in modern studies of non-gender-bound females.<sup>30</sup> The harmful aspects that Jung recounts still fill our consulting rooms. People would be psychologically healthier, Jung avers, if the mother did not have to carry the great load of what we project onto the feminine and if both sexes could express and reclaim their cherishing and nurturing sides.<sup>31</sup>

In “The Psychological Aspects of the Kore,” Jung highlights the anima. Here, archetypal images of the daughter are restricted to a more or less erotic, troubled, undeveloped, anima-like feminine such as Aphrodite, Helen (Selene), or Persephone. Jung places the Demeter-Kore myth, the connection between mother and maiden, in the center of the feminine psyche in that it allows a woman to live as both mother and daughter, backward and forward in time. The Demeter-Kore myth “extend[s] the feminine consciousness both upwards and downwards. They add an ‘older and younger,’ ‘stronger and weaker’ dimension to it and widen out the narrowly limited conscious mind bound in space and time, giving it intimations of a greater and more comprehensive personality which has a share in the central core of things . . . We could therefore say that every mother contains her daughter in herself and every daughter her mother, and that every woman extends backwards into her mother and forwards into her daughter.”<sup>32</sup>

In his exploration of the Demeter-Kore archetype, Jung omits the Old Woman (Hecate) and her rightful place in the myth. Hecate called attention to the Kore’s predicament and tried, unsuccessfully, to get help from the fathers for her. Hecate and Persephone later merged in that they both were considered the powerful rulers of the underworld. This aspect of the myth, which Jung omits, takes it out of the anima realm and into a more rounded and complete representation of a woman’s journey and development.

In “The Psychological Aspects of the Kore,” Jung touches on a possible difference in the individuation process for women and for men: a woman is much more likely to be involved in a *nekyia*, a descent to the underworld, than in a heroic fight with a dragon. A quest for treasure, or some secret, found through suffering and with the help of the instincts is also mentioned. He alludes to the connection with the earth, the underworld, the body, and even orgiastic sexuality and blood, though, again, he does not develop it. (Jungians Sylvia Perera and Betty Meador have enlarged this idea and find it relevant to and healing for contemporary women.)<sup>33</sup> Jung recognizes that a women’s way of developing has no opposite or counterpart in the masculine. He differentiates it from the anima:



DEMETER AND KORE (?)

*Demeter and Kore. Marble grave stele, Pharsalus, Greece, early fifth century BC, the Louvre. In Neumann, Great Mother, 149.*

But the Demeter-Kore myth is far too feminine to have been merely the result of an anima-projection. Although the anima can, as we have said, experience herself in Demeter-Kore, she is yet of a wholly different nature. She is in the highest degree *femme à homme*, whereas Demeter-Kore exists on the plane of mother-daughter experience, which is alien to man and shuts him out. In fact, the psychology of the Demeter cult bears all the features of a matriarchal order of society, where the man is an indispensable but on the whole a disturbing factor.<sup>34</sup>

It is only fairly recently that psychology at large has started to rebalance its projection onto women as being creatures basically flawed

and its projection onto the individual mother as being the source of all the patient's sorrow. Much valuable reimagining of the feminine has been done by female followers of Freud and of Jung.<sup>35</sup> For instance, Freudian Karen Horney suggested in the early 1930s that men's womb envy had much more valence in human psychology than did women's penis envy.<sup>36</sup> French feminist psychoanalysts reclaimed feeling and the power of the feminine as being as important as, if not more important than, intellectualism, science, and the power of the patriarchy.<sup>37</sup> Freudian psychoanalyst Nancy Chodorow reframed the Oedipus complex in a way that radically reinterprets the Electra complex and revalues women's developmental experience:

The feminine oedipus complex is not simply a transfer of affection from mother to father and giving up of the mother. Rather, psychoanalytic research demonstrates the continued importance of a girl's external and internal relation to her mother, and the way her relation to her father is added to this. This process entails a relational complexity in feminine self-definition and personality which is not characteristic of masculine self-definition of personality. Relational capacities that are curtailed in boys as a result of the masculine oedipus complex are sustained in girls.<sup>38</sup>

On the Jungian side, Emma Jung was the first in a long line of women who strove to reclaim a sense of their own psychology. This was an important step toward defining the feminine in a more positive way and helping combat the negative self-image and self-doubt that seemed (and still seems) the heritage women bear of what they have been taught about themselves. Many analysts' most creative work, especially that of female analysts, examines and reframes Jungian ideas about the feminine and provides positive alternative stories about women's psychology. I will mention in passing the valuable work done by Emma Jung, Esther Harding, Barbara Hannah, Toni Wolff, and Beatrice Hinkle in Jung's time, on to Irene de Castillejo, Hilde Binswanger, Jane Wheelwright, Ann Ulanov, Judith Hubback, Sylvia Perera, and E. C. Whitmont in the 1950s through the 1980s, on to

Patricia Berry, Marion Woodman, Polly Young-Eisendrath, Ellen Siegelman, Naomi Lowinsky, Barbara Stevens Sullivan, C. P. Estés, C. Douglas, and many others today.<sup>39</sup> Many of these writers seek to counter the extreme dichotomy into which the early analysts often pigeonholed men and women and to free both genders from rigid sociocultural requirements for behavior.

*The Dove, the Young Girl, and the Snake*

As important as the facts of the matter we are considering are the matrices into which we fit them. These matrices construct themselves from, among other influences, the primary ones of our culture: where and when we live; how we are educated, from the influences of our family—especially our parents or caretakers—our religion, our history; what happens to us; and from our own idiosyncratic natures. I have long been interested in Jung's life, especially how it came about that he was open to the feminine in a time when his peers were content to pathologize or dismiss it. Compared with other psychologists of his day, Jung held a different, more enlightened and inquiring, view. He paid much more attention to the feminine in his theories, most often looking at women as men's opposite, but also by contemplating his own anima, his feminine side. Jung's greatest contribution to our understanding of the feminine, though, is his inclusion of the archetypal feminine and her many images. This has given his followers much material to use to explore the feminine and to reevaluate its meaning through finding archetypal images more congruent with present-day needs and development, new images to better fit what it means individually to be a woman today. In *The Woman in the Mirror* and in a 1998 article I wrote about Jung's mother and father in relation to his personality and the development of his theories,<sup>40</sup> I attempt to trace some of the personal antecedents of his interest in the feminine both in the influence of his problematical relationship with his mother and in his fascination with a series of anima figures. I would like to continue this work by revisiting figures Jung visioned at a critical time in his personal and professional life.

Part of the sheaf of papers from the compost heap of the dream that I recount in the Introduction is a dream Jung had at a time of personal crisis and soul-searching after he and Freud had parted ways. This dream led to a series of Active Imaginations, which exerted a notable healing effect on Jung. In the dream, which he recounts in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung is sitting at the head of a table in an ancient hall, his children around him. Suddenly, a white dove lands on the table and transforms itself into a beautiful little girl, who runs off to play with Jung's children. She returns and throws her arms lovingly around Jung's neck, disappears back into the form of the dove, then announces, "Only in the first hours of the night can I transform myself into a human being, while the male dove is busy with the twelve dead."<sup>41</sup>

In his memoir, Jung discusses at some length the male dove and who the twelve dead might be, as if they were the essence of the dream. (They were to be the source of *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos*—Seven Sermons to the Dead.)<sup>42</sup> He never again mentions the dove (God's messenger) or the little girl. Yet, I believe this dream of the young girl prefigured, or triggered, Jung's ensuing healing process: it was set in motion through contact with the "human being," the young, undeveloped feminine, the little girl who flung her arms lovingly around Jung and who led him back to his own childhood and memories of being a boy about the girl's age and playing with building blocks. In a larger sense, Jung's psyche allowed the undeveloped feminine spirit to lead and instruct him. Through her feeling response to Jung and her ability to play, she taught him a knowing beyond correct scientific responses and habitual ways. At a loss as to how to set about finding himself again, Jung surrendered his ego identification with Jung the Freudian psychoanalyst. Instead, he followed the lead of the dove and the girl—his repressed intuitive and feeling sense, but also the holder of ancient ways of knowing that could bestow new creativity, life, and a feminine fluidity. By following her lead, he again allowed himself to play as a child would play. The young girl guided him as he found new wonder in the old. Thus, Jung started to play with stones and dirt and water the same way a child would take building blocks and create a living world from them. He built a whole village.



This reconnection with his childhood brought Jung a rush of emotion and reunited him with his childhood creativity. The freedom and energy he experienced may have stabilized him enough to know that his fantasies could be trusted. Though, at first, Jung feared them as a possible sign of insanity, they became another form of the little girl's gift, an entrance to the source of what the Hindus call Lila: the feminine, ever-renewing, and ever-creative force who dances the world.

Jung wrote of the power of allowing the psyche to thus reveal itself. He dedicated himself to its service and learned to allow it to rise and teach him. He translated the emotions that threatened to overwhelm him into images and then studied each in turn. By doing so, he allowed the unconscious and conscious to work harmoniously together. He sums this process up by writing, "Today I can say I never lost touch with my initial experiences. All my work, all my creative activity, has come from those initial fantasies and dreams which began in 1912, almost fifty years ago. Everything that I accomplished in later life was already contained in them, although at first only in emotions and images."<sup>43</sup>

I need to revisit Jung's initial fantasies to see what they can tell us about the feminine of his age that we have inherited. In one of his first Active Imaginations, Jung descends to what seems like the land of the dead or another world. Here he sees three figures: the first is an old man, who tells Jung his name is Elijah (and who later transforms into an even more ancient character named Philemon, and again into a Ka: Jung's shadow);<sup>44</sup> next is a black snake that, Jung states, "displayed an unmistakable fondness for me"; and then a woman whom Jung describes as "a beautiful young girl" who is blind and is named Salome. His comment about her echoes the mistrust of the feminine endemic in much of our Judeo-Christian-Mohammedan culture: "of Salome I was distinctly suspicious."<sup>45</sup>

Jung goes on briefly to amplify these figures (two of whom, as you may have noted, gave me the title for this chapter). Jung says the snake indicates a hero myth and that Elijah and Salome are a couple representative of Logos and Eros. "Salome is an anima figure. She is blind because she does not see the meaning of things. Elijah is the figure of a wise old man and represents the factor of intelligence and knowledge; Salome the erotic element."<sup>46</sup>

Jung's quaternity of himself, the wise old man, the beautiful and blind Salome, and the snake has long haunted me. This quaternity, along with the magical and transformative little girl of Jung's dream, the dove/girl who runs off to play and who returns to him so lovingly, gives us great insight into Jung himself and into the state of the masculine and the feminine in his time. The young girl in the dream evokes strong feeling, at least from me. She is magical, part divine, coming down from the sky in the form of a white dove. She is a great revelation and gift, and yet is consciously ignored by Jung. The dove is potent with feminine dynamism; she carries the feminine energies of peace, maternity, and prophecy. She represents the carrier of God's words, the Holy Ghost, who was originally Sophia, wisdom. Sophia, in her white dove form, according to the Gnostics, both helped impregnate Mary and descended on Jesus and the apostles to impregnate their minds with spirit knowledge. But the dove has a far more ancient history, as an emblem of Venus and Aphrodite and, even farther back, in ancient Mesopotamia, as the Great Mother Goddess of fertility and death. Seen in this way, the dove is the divine feminine that takes the form of a young girl in order to bring Jung a new and healing way of relating to the world, one that meets his developed rational scientific thinking with the alternative of divine inspiration, play, affection, and love.

Jung mentions that the girl is about eight, and so one can hazard that an undeveloped part of Jung's own undeveloped feminine nature was also about eight. Age eight was a time in Jung's life when he played mostly alone. He describes himself then as being absorbed in building and tending little fires in a cave amid the large blocks of stone in his garden wall. At that age, he also chose a certain stone embedded in the slope near the wall. Here he sat and pondered questions of interrelatedness and reality: "Am I sitting on the stone? or is the stone wondering who is sitting on me?" "Am I the one who is sitting on the stone, or am I the stone on which he is sitting?"<sup>47</sup> These are suitable questions for matriarchal consciousness and also for a more integral time than Jung's, as they concern themselves with the interrelationship of humanity and nature and who or what supports whom. However, in order to take his part in the world of the fathers in

which he lived, Jung first had to develop a patriarchal consciousness and separate himself from connection. He had to repress this part of himself and enter the world of late nineteenth- , early twentieth-century Europe, with its schooling in books, opposites, and rational, hierarchical consciousness.

As befitting a rational, highly educated man of his time, when Jung allowed himself to descend into the Elijah fantasy, he found two well-developed masculine figures: Jung himself, and Elijah. Jung had successfully accomplished the tasks of the first part of life; he was well established and successful at the work he liked best; he was married, had children, and fulfilled the role required of him in his Swiss canton and culture. From this position, it was natural for him to relate positively and with respect to the wise old man (as it was for him to go off in the earlier dream to wonder about the male dove and the twelve dead).

Jung reports that he “stuck close to Elijah, because he seemed the most reasonable of the three, and to have a clear intelligence.”<sup>48</sup> The masculine that went before him and the wise old man in this fantasy could and did converse, and Jung could learn from their superior insight. The wise old man represents a needed internal figure in Jung’s psyche: the voice and wisdom of the fathers.

But let us pause a bit and look at the feminine figures: Salome and the black snake. Salome is blind and, for Jung, represents the erotic element. He does not trust her. He cannot trust her because the feminine in Jung’s day was terra incognita. The culture’s lack of knowledge about women and about the feminine side of men’s own characters was projected out onto women as distrust. As an anima figure for Jung, his undeveloped feminine Eros felt slippery and untrustworthy. Jung, as a man, was often attracted to a certain type of woman, and he sometimes tended, therefore, to want to blame her for enticing him. This is a complex question that goes far beyond who did what to whom or who was sitting on what. Suffice it to say that Jung’s doubt of this feminine character takes its place in a long list of men’s mistrust. Men, historically, have tended to be attracted by women but then to blame them for the attraction: by seducing them or simply for the sin of Eros. They doubt and mistrust their inner feminine as

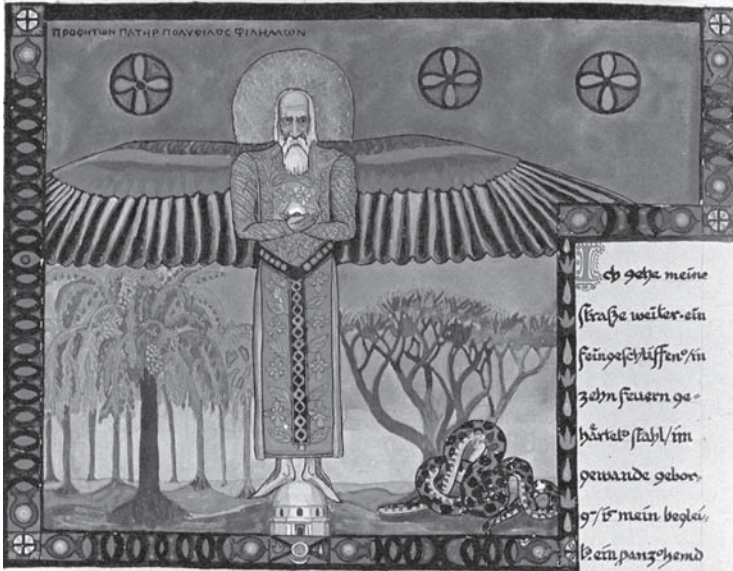
well as women or dismiss them as Jung dismisses Salome as an anima figure who, he reports, is incapable of seeing the meaning in things.

The high point of the patriarchy coincided with the dualistic tendency to split things apart and define things in opposition to something else: good versus evil; West versus East; men versus women; Logos versus Eros; right versus wrong; white versus black. No ambiguities, shadow, or shades of gray or muting were allowed. Thus, for Jung, the logical, thinking man who, as a scientist, saw and examined things as they were, Salome carried Eros, feeling, and intuition. She represented parts of Jung he still found unacceptable in himself. It is natural to mistrust what one does not know or has repressed.

Salome was blind because she looked inward, but she was also blind because men were blind to her and what she could teach them. In his biography of Jung, Laurens van der Post writes both about Jung's undeveloped anima and his wounded relationship with women. In discussing this same fantasy, van der Post writes of the blindness: "It is as if in that vision of Salome all that guided his [Jung's] yesterdays is saying to him, 'Look at that girl. That is what life has done to us. It has denied us our own feminine vision and so deprived us of meaning. That is what is wrong with your so called civilization; that is the wrong so great that even you who had allowed us to guide you hither have been maimed likewise. We can do no more now. You know what the trouble is and knowing it, you ignore it at your peril.'"<sup>49</sup>

It was only much later in Jung's career, after he had long studied the feminine psyche, had learned from the many women in analysis with him, had drawn on the wisdom of such women as his wife, Emma, and Toni Wolff, and had accompanied other women in analysis who were developing a more integrated feminine self, that he reported that his inner feminine figure, Salome, had regained her sight.<sup>50</sup>

I have left the figure of the large black snake, which had an unmistakable fondness for Jung, until last. Jung, as I have said, took the snake as an indication of a hero myth. He added that the hero sometimes had a snake's eyes, sometimes was changed into a snake, and sometimes had the snake as his mother. It is this last interpretation that I would like to pursue.



*Philemon. In Jaffe, Bild und Wort, 67.*

The snake represents both the chthonic and the instinctual, both death and rebirth. She is considered old beyond old as she sheds her skin and thus is reborn and ageless. Like the dove, she is connected with the Great Mother but now more emphasizing her qualities as Earth Mother and wisdom. Yet she also represents Shakti, the Hindu creative force, power, and dynamism of the feminine. In her Kundalini form, she awakens from her uroboric sleep, coiled motionless around a Siva phallus, and rises through and enlightens each chakra, or subtle energy center of the human body. She brings new energy and awareness to each level of the subtle body on her journey to unite, in her Great Goddess form, with her consort, Siva, in the crown chakra. Here an adept can experience their union as it explodes through the top of the head into spiritual and orgasmic union, with all the interrelated energy centers of the world and cosmos. Thus, the snake energy has the ability to travel from the chthonic to the sublime. They, and all points in between, are enlivened, revived by the creative power of the dynamic feminine.

The serpent goddess as Great Goddess, Earth Mother, the Old Woman was venerated throughout prepatriarchal times and continues to be venerated in many nonpatriarchal cultures, such as the Native American, which see the snake as a potent symbol of love, healing, and transformation. She has been worshiped in her snake form in India, Cambodia, China, the ancient Aegean world, in Sumer and Babylon, Syria and Iran, Akkadia, Egypt, and ancient Palestine. In fact, the Jewish priestly clan was called “sons of the Great Serpent.” The Gnostics, in their understanding and reverence for the feminine, honored both Eve and the snake for their efforts to bring greater consciousness to humans. In a Gnostic Gospel written in the third century, another form of the Adam and Eve story is presented that keeps alive the understanding of the Old Woman’s wisdom: “The Female Principle came in the Snake, the Instructor, and it taught them, saying, ‘you shalt not die [if you eat the apple]; for it was out of jealousy that he [Jahweh] said this to you. Rather your eyes shall open, and you shall become like gods, recognizing evil and good.’”<sup>51</sup>

The snake was once universally considered a divine emanation of the Mother Goddess and as representing life and death, the earth and the underworld, eternity, fertility, and regeneration. Judeo-Christianity, however, turned against the Great Mother and found her snake form evil, a representative of the devil, and a tempter of women. Judeo-Christians blamed both the snake (their precursors’ Goddess) and Eve (now emblematic of the overly curious, weak feminine sex) as the cause of humanity’s pain and toil-filled lives. It was not enough for the patriarchy to despise the Great Goddess and her emissaries; it needed, in the name of progress, to smash her temples, destroy her statues and texts, and kill her followers. The snake became a feared and despised creature, yet, most significantly for the start of the Integral age of consciousness, the snake in Jung’s visions has something significant to teach him.

I briefly consider the figures of Jung’s vision in *The Woman in the Mirror*. In that book, I conclude that the black snake represents not only the Great Mother but also a missing human fourth in Jung’s quaternity. It stands in place of the Old Woman—the old and potent feminine that was still undeveloped both in Jung’s psyche and in the consciousness of the time.

In Jung's vision of Elijah, Salome, and the dark serpent, and in his later work (such as the visions in which Elijah transforms into Philemon and then the dark double, Ka, appears, and in Jung's writing on the Kore), the wise Old Woman figure represented by Hecate or the Crone (or, here, the Great Mother in her serpent form) is absent or largely neglected. It is an essential aspect of the feminine that governs the third stage of a woman's life and the third aspect of her psyche; it frees a woman from the biological "life-stream" that Jung felt was the essential part of women's myths. It also holds both light and shadow as intrinsic parts of the feminine as well as the feminine archetype. The Old Woman (another name for the Great Goddess), in her form as an aged holder of wisdom, joins the maiden and the mother; old age follows youth and maturity. The powerful underworld queen and shaman/bawd rounds out and extends the cycle of nurtured-nurturer. The old wise woman or crone probably was too potent an image for Jung's time, but in its serpent form certainly showed a fondness for Jung. It called out to his unconscious and worked there in the dark, as did the dove/girl of his dream.

Today, partly thanks to Jung, we more consciously embrace the Old Woman and this serpent power. This is an archetype that is coming up strongly in people's psyches, along with a different understanding of, and valence to, the snakes and dragons of their dreams. It will hold an honored place in the following three chapters.

### *Appendix*

I. This is a poem I wrote that captures in a deeply personal way some of the feelings of the blissful preoccupation that may occur in the "mother-love" stage of mothering.

#### THE MOTHER SPEAKS: SUMMER, 1956

*There is no other  
Not you in my arms  
Nor me holding you  
Like water we flow together  
Like warm blood*

*Look there, my little breast-fed darling  
Feel the delight  
In your delicious arms and legs  
Curling with joyful recognition  
As we look into our eyes  
Mirroring one to the other*

*Our body knows itself so well  
That you grow cranky  
When I'm about to menstruate  
And my stomach tightens  
Just before you want to nurse  
The milk lets down a second before  
Your sweet cherub mouth  
Closes over my nipple*

*We need no speech to understand each other  
At this most blessed moment in time  
Just this flow pulsing back and forth  
Here, now, in the warmth of a slow  
New Hampshire summer  
The sun enfolding us  
The air full of scintillating light  
That warms the single heart  
Beating inside my daughter and me  
In this honeyed yet evanescent synchrony  
We share calm abundance  
And a homely experience of grace*

II. And this, a poem I wrote that tries to understand, also in a deeply personal way, a teenager's feelings of "anything but mother."

#### THE DAUGHTER SPEAKS, 1968

*You are completely other  
I can't stand it here next to you*



*And your stupid dreamy face  
My body disgusts itself with you  
And floods with sulks and sudden animosity  
It's all your fault you woman, you!*

*My father no longer loves you and I take his side  
I'll outdo him in his dislike  
And sabotage your feeble efforts to win me back  
I'll tell you nothing from now on but lies  
And hate you worse when you buy them  
So anxious to have peace  
To ally yourself with me*

*Why do I have to be your daughter?  
It fills me with itchy exasperation  
You do nothing right  
Why can't you fade into the woodwork  
Like other mothers here  
No one notices them  
I'm native like everyone else  
Not stranded fancy-pants summer folk like you  
You embarrass me*

*I'd like to cut you off as fast as I can  
While the commander of darkness  
(My angry despair) takes your place  
It plans to extinguish all your light  
As it's demolishing mine  
And even darkens this dark photo here*

*I've thrown my lot with my father  
Chosen him, by far, over you  
Your nagging drives me crazy  
And your wounded sensitivity  
You airy fairy bitch  
Everything's gone wrong between us*

*We share nothing in common but loss  
And there's no escape.*

*I'm stuck in misery here with you  
My young heart as broken and  
Rusted out as the old tractor  
That lies against the rotting barn  
At the foot of my father's new house  
Where he won't let me live.*



## CHAPTER 2

# *The Snake and the Girl Transfigured*

## A Feminine Birthright Reclaimed

As a mother would risk her own life  
To protect her only child,  
Even so let one cultivate a boundless  
Heart towards all living beings.  
Let one's love pervade the whole world,  
Without any obstructions,  
Above, below and across,  
Without hatred, without enmity.

—Buddha Vandana

In this chapter I plan to share some personal stories as well as some numinous tales from ancient Buddhism. My purpose is to enliven our understanding of the feminine by giving some models of the Old Woman that are transformative yet fully embodied: sacred, sensual, intense, loving, and fierce. They transfigure the snake and the girl by reclaiming a feminine birthright we may have forgotten, yet for which we profoundly long. These models of the Old Woman hold archetypal energy. They reimagine the feminine and the Mother archetype

to include many attributes that we have rejected or split into various segments or part-selves.

As I state in Chapter 1, Judeo-Christianity suppressed the pre-Aryan Goddess religions and left us only male models of divinity. In India and Tibet, however, the pre-Aryan Goddess religions stayed alive through a stream of mostly Saiva,<sup>1</sup> nondualistic traditions that preserved a comprehensive and cohesive image of the Great Mother. By the eighth century, these earlier traditions had merged with Hindu and Buddhist teachings to include Tantricism, in which female deities were honored and there was a lineage (now lost or gone deep underground) of great women teachers.

It is not my purpose to go into this fascinating history, but, suffice it to say, it served to counterbalance the priestly, patrifocal lineage and continues to be a strong force, especially in Tibet. Tsultrim Allione refers to the importance of female deities, visualization, embodiment, dance, symbol, and image in this often left-handed path, which coexists and sometimes merges with the more rigid, dualistic, and formal priestly ones.<sup>2</sup> Vajrayogini and Tara are two of the most vibrant and important female deities, or Buddhas. I have chosen them (or they have chosen me) because they are powerful, active, many-sided, transformative examples of core feminine energy. They fulfill some of our yearning for feminine models of the Old Woman.

There have been many movements, meetings, and conferences on aspects of the feminine these past years, whether within or outside organized religion and psychology. Mostly women have been in attendance, and whether it is a Jungian conference on the Dark Feminine, a Jewish one on the Shekinah, an Esalen one on the Kundalini or women's sexuality, a Noetic Science one on ecological disasters—how we are despoiling our Great Mother Earth—I notice a common subtext: an undercurrent of individual and collective pain. And the pain is often accompanied by a barely contained feeling of great anger. Women, it seems, are leaving patriarchal religions, psychological training, marriage, relationships, traditional (including Jungian) mind-sets in which they feel not only that something essential is missing but also in which they and their feminine selves feel devalued. Many people

yearn for a more complete image of the feminine and a more accurate conception of women's wholeness than our culture gives us. Both men and women need a more ample feminine archetypal image of the Self and the Divine that can encompass and contain our growing sense of who we are. We need a feminine archetypal representative of the Self and the Divine that can assuage our alienation and our hunger. We also need a more personal and direct connection to Nature and to the Divine, with accompanying images that invoke embodied awe and embodied wonder. This is what I feel is behind the interest in Goddess imagery as well as the growth of women who are creating new rituals for themselves, full-moon dances, women's circles.

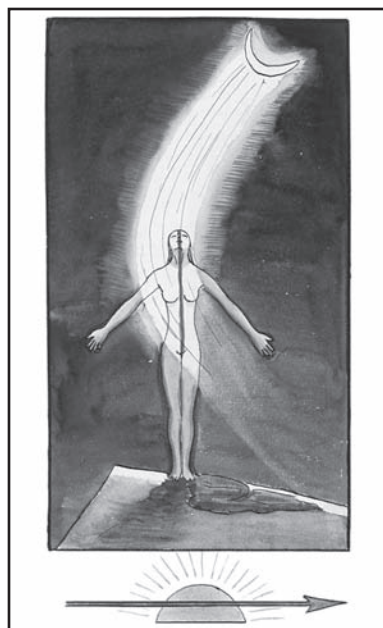
With this interest comes a need to gather stories, images, dreams, experiences. A need to share these inspires us to look past the patriarchal lens—a lens that no longer fits our eyes—and toward what E. C. Whitmont calls a connection with the continuum of existence.<sup>3</sup> There is a need for the new as well as a reclaiming of the old, but often there are no words, yet, that can hold these feelings, and no fully realized image of the Great Mother seems at hand. It is time, as Georgia O'Keeffe once said about her art, to allow form to emerge inevitably from the process of making the unknown known.

This form is slowly making itself visible to consciousness. I see this most clearly in dreams and in the psyches of my patients. Many, primarily women, when they have done a great deal of preliminary work on themselves, are reclaiming a sense of the Great Mother as a living potency, but they still lack a history, a story about her, that satisfies. My perception varies from what Jung was seeing in the first half of the twentieth century when, for instance, he stated, "The concept of the Great Mother belongs to the field of comparative religion and embraces widely varying types of the mother-goddess. The concept itself is of no immediate concern to psychology, because the image of the Great Mother in this form is rarely encountered in practice, and then only under very special conditions."<sup>4</sup>

Part of my own search for "the image of the Great Mother" took me to Nepal a few years ago. I had finished many years of editing Jung's *The Visions Seminar* and was a little brain dead, but the depic-



*The Green Snake. In Christiana Morgan's vision notebooks, vol. 2. Morgan family archives.*



*Woman bathed in moonlight. In Christiana Morgan's vision notebooks, vol. 2. Morgan family archives.*

tion of a more-complete feminine archetype that visioner Christiana Morgan had struggled to birth still haunted me. Some images of hers are strikingly similar to ones I encountered on my journey.

### *Vajrayogini*

I went to Nepal in pursuit of a figure who had started to emerge prominently in my dreams and who a Buddhist friend later suggested might be connected to Vajrayogini, a female Buddha. Sanskrit texts from the tenth to the twelfth centuries CE refer to her as a “blessed one,” a “deity,” and a “goddess.” Elizabeth English, in her definitive study of Vajrayogini, writes that she is “divine in the sense that she embod-



*Female Abraxis. In  
Christiana Morgan's vision  
notebooks, vol. 2. Morgan  
family archives.*

ies enlightenment; and she is worshiped as the center of a mandala of other enlightened beings, the supreme focus of devotion.”<sup>5</sup> She is honored in Tibet in daily prayers as “the Origin of all Mandalas” and “the splendor of samsara and Nirvana” (loosely, earth and heaven). Part of another common daily prayer to Vajrayogini calls on her as a Blessed Mother who is steadfast, fierce, and unconquered. Her fierce and wrathful form is praised as a help in dispelling fear, dullness, and rigidity.<sup>6</sup>

A Tibetan sacred text describes her as having one face, because all teachings are basically one, and two arms, because of the unity of *upaya*, skillful means, and *prajna*, wisdom. Her form is absolutely terrifying, enraged by the hordes of human temptations, and very wrathful. Her body is red, blazing with rays of light, which are said to pervade all the three thousand worlds. In her two hands she holds a *vajra*-ornamented hooked knife and a skull cup of blood. She assumes a dancing pose. She is the knower of past, present, and future. Grimacing wrathfully to subdue the four *maras*, or great temptations,



*Vajrayogini, the Coemergent Mother. Drawing by Glen Eddy.  
In Simmer-Brown, Dakini's Warm Breath, 138.*



she clenches her fangs and bites her lower lip. Her dark brown hair streams upward. Her secret place, the holy triangle, is the source of all dharma and is said to glow like an ember.

Vajrayogini has other poses and other attributes: the Great Bliss Queen, as Ann Carolyn Klein refers to her, or the Dakini's Warm Breath, as Judith Simmer-Brown names her.<sup>7</sup> In her form as Vajra Vahari (the Adamantine Sow), she is represented with a small pig's head



*Female Buddha Vajrayogini. Drawing by Emily Martindale from a Nepalese wood-block print. In Shaw, Passionate Enlightenment, 29.*



*Isis sitting on a pig. In Neumann, Great Mother, 140, after Seligmann, Der Bese Blick und Verwandtes, 293.*

growing above her right ear and to the side of her human one. This shows her connection with ancient Sow Goddesses in the Upper Paleolithic, Neolithic, and Copper Ages in Old Europe.<sup>8</sup> Erich Neumann writes of the pig as a symbol of the archetypal feminine, as a fertile Earth Goddess, and connected with Isis in ancient Egypt, and with ancient Greek fertility rites in the Eleusinian mysteries and the Thesmophoria.<sup>9</sup>

Vajrayogini herself sometimes took on human form as an ugly old hag to teach proud monks who needed to learn to bow to her sovereignty; sometimes she appeared as a beautiful woman who insisted, for the good of a particular monk's rigidified practice or dried-up soul, that he needed not only to study, with her as his student, but also to serve her, or even to make love with her. Vajrayogini was said to love women, especially, and there are many stories of her appearing to them in dreams, helping them, and even of her inhabiting her worshipers' bodies so that they can learn from within and in a physical way what monks and *siddhis* (mystics in direct contact with "God") learned from texts.

Vajrayogini sometimes is depicted as an inverted triangle, the source of all dharma teaching. She is said to spring, burning with bliss and energy, from the cosmic womb. When she is visualized, she activates the chakra centers and helps one dissolve the opposites, and all conflicting passions, back into primordial bliss. She represents divine and sacred female energy and is the finest of teachers, as she appears at decisive moments in one's practice—and through dreams—to challenge one to expand one's understanding and to help one grow beyond received wisdom. Thus, she grounds but is also often fierce, wrathful, raw, and difficult to encounter, for she challenges all assumptions. Tibetan monks and nuns, during their three-year retreats, meditate on her for three to six months straight in the privacy of their cells in order to learn from her. She continually calls for a profound and often unexpected response. But rather than echoing scholars' findings, and folk and dharma stories, I will let Vajrayogini's attributes unfold within my story.

In Nepal, I gradually learned why I had been dreaming of Vajrayogini. Let me take the reader on part of my journey. I'll start with Bajra Bahari, Vajrayogini's third great shrine in Nepal, and the most ancient. It is remote, but near the Newari village of Chapaguan far up in the hills to the southwest of Kathmandu. (The Newars were one of the first settlers of the region.) The temple in Chapaguan Grove is primarily a Newari holy place, but both Tibetans and shamanistic Newars consider it sacred. The temple is a squat one-story building topped by a large tiled pagoda roof with a smaller roof above it; it sits in a low spot in the center of a vast open wood. Though the shrine here has small open entrances on three sides, it feels secret and shadowy, and, as I stooped to enter, I felt myself in the presence of something uncannily primitive and fierce. My companion, repelled by the eeriness and by the stench of rancid oil and rotting offerings, refused to go farther. Once inside, I peered more closely to try to make out what was left of the statues but could discern no clear figures. A deeply stained grave-sized trough in the front center of the shrine held a form that showed Vajrayogini supine with her legs raised either sexually or in order to give birth. But having endured centuries of ghee, paste, flowers, blood, and God knows what else massaged into her by

her devotees, she could just as well have been a hummock of shapeless stone, or a Henry Moore sculpture of “the Mother” reduced to hips, buttocks, and breasts. There was a second statue of Vajrayogini, erect in a niche centered at the back of the shrine, but it, too, had become nearly formless, rubbed away by centuries of offerings.

As I stood there, off in the shadows, a slight Newari woman who might have been in her thirties entered the shrine. She proceeded to offer Vajrayogini the traditional *puja*—flowers, candles, butter, colored powder, purified foods, and incense. She started to chant as she daubed first the stone forms and then herself with the contents of her tray.

The woman’s chant was soft and, at first, I paid it no attention. But then I was caught by its insistent tone of lamentation—ragged, assertive, and impassioned. The woman made her offering with fierce intensity as her chant turned ever more guttural and demanding. She seemed to be informing Vajrayogini of her daily burdens and irritations, then of her sorrows, then it seemed to me as if she were laying all the sorrows of the world before Vajrayogini in ecstatic despair. I found myself silently joining with the Newari woman and offering my own stripped feelings and heartache along with hers. The anguish, so palpable in that small temple, opened me to a flood of people’s suffering across the world and back through time, to the cruelty inflicted by humans on each other and the destructiveness we have wreaked on our planet even in my lifetime. But I was also opened to the inevitability of death and destruction; to Mother Earth as volcano, hurricane, earthquake, wildfire. I felt the Old Woman’s presence vividly here as Death Mother as well as Life Bringer, Creator and Destroyer.

I was suddenly brought back from my mourning by the Newari woman, who was silently offering me her tray and motioning me to daub myself and the statue. I dried my eyes and did, but as I touched the mounded rock, I jumped back because it felt warm to the touch. No one had written of thermal springs here or some other natural source for this strange heat; the Newari woman simply nodded as if she shared a secret with me and then was gone.

The primal force of the woman’s lamentation and of that emanating from the rocks seemed far different from the more tender and

sweeter power flowing from other Vajrayogini temples I had visited, but it replicated the Great Mother's powerfully fiery nature. The redness that daubed the statues appeared as bloody and ferocious as it was impassioned. It made me think that elements of the Hindu creator and destroyer goddess Kali joined the Buddhist Vajrayogini here to make a fitting home for a neglected side of feminine experience: anger and grief.

Before this, I had wondered why Vajrayogini is often explained away, especially in the West, simply as a Tibetan Kali and, as with Kali Ma, reduced to her destructive aspect; at the same time, she is one of the most venerated and meditated upon figures in the Buddhist pantheon. Both Kali and Vajrayogini have much in common. They embody an inherently fiery, active aspect of feminine wholeness from which our Western Judeo-Christian world recoils. It rejects this powerful and sometimes uncanny part of the feminine, fears it, and turns it demonic. These Great Mother archetypes have their fierceness equated with evil, as when Kali is reduced to a devil-possessed witch who is supposed to cause cholera and eat little children. This ignores her ancient triune Goddess role and thus makes it easier to discount the feminine's power. In contrast, the ancient Mahanirvana tantra addresses Kali in this way: "Thou art the Original of all manifestations; Thou art the birthplace of even Us; Thou knowest the whole world, yet none know Thee . . . Thou art both Subtle and Gross, Manifested and Veiled, Formless, yet with form. Who can understand Thee? . . . It is Thou who art the Supreme Primordial Kalika . . . Resuming after dissolution Thine own form, dark and formless, Thou alone remains as One ineffable and inconceivable . . . Thou art the Beginning of all, Creatrix, Protectress, and Destructress."<sup>10</sup>

Because both Kali's and Vajrayogini's followers meditate on and teach about death and impermanence, even meditating in cremation grounds, people who fear this dark side of life turn things around and teach that these two Earth Mothers one-sidedly create death and destruction. With this demonization, their multiple strengths and potent feminine help, their birthing, nurturing, and protective sides, are overlooked, and only the Death Mother aspect of the Great Mother is seen. Since we Westerners, especially in the United States, live in



*Kali. Mixed Media, 2001, by Erin Currier. Author's collection.*

an optimistic, forward-looking, mind-focused society, women are deprived of, or taught to fear and suppress, their knowledge of this often formless mound of feeling—the Great Triune of birthing, nurturing, and destroying Mother in themselves.

It was the same with Lilith in the Bible.<sup>11</sup> Though Lilith preceded Adam by many centuries as a great pre-Aryan, Sumer-Babylonian agricultural goddess, in a more ancient Bible than the current one, Lilith was Adam's first wife. An ancient text, the Alpha Bet Ben Sira, tells the story that Jehovah created Adam and Lilith in parity as counterparts and complements. Lilith was said to treasure this equality and also to be active in their lovemaking. In one story, perhaps echoing the split into opposites in gender roles and the rise of rabbinical and Muslim patrifocal religions, Adam insisted on only one sort of sexuality, with the couple in the missionary position and Lilith held passive beneath him. She did not want to be limited this way and so refused to have sex with him. She was cast out of Eden, or fled it, cursing Adam, and was banished to the ends of the earth, where she was supposed to spend her time copulating with demons, bearing hundreds of children a day, and raging at her exclusion from Eden. Lilith's passionate nature and her sexuality remind me of Vajrayogini's and of the frustrated and inchoate rage so many women are feeling today.

Lilith was beautiful, too, and powerful, not the She-Monster archetype of the negative feminine into which we have turned her. And, as an Earth Mother goddess, she was expert in lovemaking and nurtured everything; but she also brought about the death of everything. So Lilith is another form of the Great Mother archetype—the Old Woman—creator, nurturer, and destroyer, the one-in-herself maiden, mother, crone. Lilith had her Red Sea from which everything was born and into which blood was poured in periodic sacrifices.

Vajrayogini also has her bowl of blood and her skulls. One painting of Vajrayogini has her cutting off her own head to feed her followers on her blood. Kali, too, has (or is) an Ocean of Blood at the beginning and end of the world. This is like the blood spurting out of Vajrayogini's neck and into her bowl and her follower's mouths, which nourishes the world from her body.



*Severed-head Vajrayogini. Drawing by Emily Martindale. In Shaw, Passionate Enlightenment, 112.*

Of the three, Kali receives the biggest projection of the Terrible Mother, though, and her role as creator and nurturer is as denied as Lilith's. Like Vajrayogini, Kali is meditated upon in cremation grounds and as a preparation for death. As Crone she rules death and is said to bring disease, but people who write about her most often overlook her embodiment of the triune, triple, goddess. All three archetypal images of the Great Mother—Vajrayogini, Lilith, and Kali—bring life and nourish it in endless cycles as well as bring about its demise. They hold the same mystery as the triune Goddess of the Demeter, Persephone, Hecate myth before she was blown apart into maiden, mother, and crone and her story perverted into a patrifocal one of rape and



separation. In essence, the three in one represent *mater materia*, the creation, and the dissolution of the world. They are emanations of Shakti, feminine power, and Maya, the endless spinning of creation. As such, they receive negative projections and enmity from those who have turned their back on the feminine, denied her power, fled from acknowledging their vulnerable mortality, and despised and polluted the earth rather than accepting the sacredness of earthly life.

Our culture's abhorrence of this earthed feminine power of life and death, along with our need to turn these great feminine deities into evil beings, teaches me about our culture's propensity to flee from the gross reality of life as well as from this sort of power in women and our fertile, birth-giving gushes of blood. I propose that women's bloody power may be the basis of our fear of the feminine. From a depth perspective, part of the reason we hate and fear the feminine is that it does represent life and death. Our culture has striven mightily to disempower the feminine and reduce it to a girlish, anima-like figure subject to the approval and guidance of the masculine. Our images of the feminine have been split: the powerful ignored or declared crazed or evil; the young kept apart from the old and taught to fear their own aging; and the receptive potency of archaic representations of the feminine as imaged by the strangely warm mounded stone flesh of Vajrayogini at Chapaguan Grove turned witchy and evil. As such, they are found repellent and shunned as too primitive and eerie.

In Chapaguan I met the potent, fiery, dark side of Vajrayogini. I would like the reader to follow me for a little to discover an even more basic form of the Mother archetype that so many of us need to reclaim: the White Vajrayogini.

In all the female deity cults that developed out of Hindu, Buddhist, and Saiva thought (backed by modern scientific discovery) the feminine is seen as the basic source of life.<sup>12</sup> A downward-pointing triangle, "the cosmic cervix, or the gate of all birth," "the source of dharmas,"<sup>13</sup> represents the Great Mother. Her secret place, her yoni, becomes a central focus of reverence. It is the fulcrum from which the universe and all life forms are created and back into which they are absorbed. Women's "secret place," as so many of the prayers call the yoni, is honored as the seat of Shakti, the active principle and creative

energy “which produces, pervades, sustains, and finally reabsorbs the universe.”<sup>14</sup> In many Tantric Buddhist systems, most often kept secret or overwhelmed by monkish tradition, there is a left-handed path where women in general are honored as representatives of the Great Mother, for their sexuality (Shakti’s play), for the dance of life, and for the children they conceive; mothers, especially in Tibet, are deeply venerated and thanked as life bringers who care for, nurture, and protect their young.

It amazes me that we have lost our awe and reverence for the true center that makes our existence possible; that modern culture across the world seeks to diminish, depotentiate, and dishonor women, the body, and earthly life rather than revering them; that many reduce the yoni to a temptation or a dirty joke, even going as far as to mutilate it in a perversion of masculine ownership.

It was with thoughts like these that I set out in search of the Mahabouddha Temple in Patan in Nepal. I was told that a statue of the most secret form of Vajrayogini could be found there, one that was rarely given to either men or women as their *yidam*, their special object of veneration. It was kept secret, I was told, because so few anymore could offer it the true reverence it merited.

Unlike a traditional Nepali temple, Mahabouddha soared straight up amid many smaller buildings, which enveloped and hemmed it in. It was built in the sixteenth century and modeled after a temple in Bodghaya, where Buddha was enlightened. After an earthquake in 1934, it was rebuilt and a small temple added to honor Buddha’s mother—the dowager Buddha. This fact made me feel much friendlier toward the odd temple, and I spent some time sitting with the Buddha’s mother in her temple. I remembered how she insisted that women should be among Buddha’s followers and that women should receive training, which meant that there were originally orders of women with sacred lineages of their own.

But back to my story. After climbing many steps in the main temple, I found Vajrayogini’s shrine to the left of the center entrance. The little central figure had a frieze of brass or gold carvings of animals surrounding her: two huge gold-colored snakes, so often the companions of the Great Mother, stood guard on either side of the arch above

her head; two roosters gazed pugnaciously outward as if to raise an alarm if anyone bothered her. The frieze descended with one beautifully carved animal after another, some recognizable and some clearly mythic. But this Vajrayogini was fully clothed, alas, and, though supposed to be white, her face and arms were smeared bright red. It was clear she was not standing on the ground, for her two little red-daubed feet peeped out from under her clothes at about shoulder level, both feet raised behind and beyond her arms. The Vajrayogini's head bent entrancingly to her right, and a huge halo of hair and fire rose straight above it in a great crown wreath. She stood, or hung there, suspended in space like a sky-dancing *dakini*, or holy being, but centered on and backed by the braided disks of a seven-circled red-fire mandala. A row of lit candles glowed in front of her.

Her effect was very different from that of the other Vajrayoginis I had seen; I felt that it would take far longer for anyone to be allowed to enter into her mystery. She held a simplicity, naturalness, yet depth I could not compare to other archetypal figures, whether Lilith or Kali. The closest I could come were the medieval Celtic Sheila-na-gigs, but she had none of their grotesqueness.

I was immediately drawn to the little feet floating in midair, peeking out from all the garments covering her, but I knew that this Vajrayogini held something back from my naïve delight. The pose itself embraced contrary currents: Vajrayogini's head was coquettishly tilted, but the power of her streaming hair and aura leant a fiercely conflicting force to what a Westerner might consider her come-hither look. She was covered with much fancier ornaments and jewels than the other Vajrayoginis I had seen and seemed more archetypally potent. I could not but wonder at the power of the little figure. Its energy was palpable, but the statue simply stayed hovering in space; it felt far less personal than the others, and no words or images came to help me out. But as I stood contemplating it, a sense of peace and spaciousness descended.

I needed, frankly, to see under this White Vajrayogini's clothes to find the center of her power. Who knows how things happen when one is on a quest or writing a book? It is as if one searches and searches and then, if one can move past the ego's demands and is lucky,

sometimes a space opens where books seem to fall open in one's lap and things and people appear, as if magically, to help. Some call it synchronicity or being in the flow; I find it to be a blessed, though often short-lived, state of grace for which I am deeply grateful.

The next time I visited Patan, after a fruitless quest to find a White Vajrayogini in local monastery libraries, I ran into someone I had been at pains to avoid. He was a somewhat mad-looking, unkempt man in monk's robes who was said to have come apart in Vietnam as a young combat GI. After taking to the woods as a mountain man, as many Vietnam vets did in the 1970s, he found his way to Tibetan Buddhism and Nepal. He stayed, thanks to his military disability check, and this day was headed to Vajrayogini's shrine. We had friends in common and so circled each other for a while like two suspicious dogs who did not like the other's smell—mine possibly much too clean and middle class for him, and his way too wild for me. But our mutual reverence and meditation at the White Vajrayogini's shrine brought us together. And later, over lunch, our similar tone of flat devastation when we exchanged a war story or two formed another bond. It turned out that he had taken some stage of monk's vows from a renowned teacher who had given him this particular form of Vajrayogini as his *yidam*. He had a weathered picture of her in his wallet, which he showed me, and, except for the subject matter, it could have been a Roman Catholic holy picture from my youth. After a while, he felt it was safe to talk to me about her.

The picture itself was more than I could ever have hoped for. She was a miracle of a naked White Vajrayogini in a whirling red mandala bordered with gold. Her arms were outstretched on either side, gracefully holding their *vajra* knife and bowl; her legs were raised acrobatically above and behind her head. This left the entire front of her beautiful gleaming white body exposed. A string of skulls hung behind her legs but came down just below her bare buttocks to echo their round curves, while a necklace of flowers encircled her little belly, and in between—the focal point of the picture, which drew everything toward it—was Vajrayogini's perfectly proportioned oval, open yoni in bright shades of red. The same red decorated her palms and the soles of her feet, and all echoed Vajrayogini's red and gold fire mandala, which

blazed behind her. Her yoni drew my reverent gaze as if it were the entrance to a secret mandala or a door into limitless space.

“This was painted in the seventeenth century in eastern Tibet,” the monk told me as, in frank awe of its power, I examined the picture. “When I meditate on her I know that her yoni and all women’s and female animals’ yonis are sacred and represent one of the gates through which we earthlings enter life and then can find paradise or, even better, enlightenment.

“So she, this white one, has her red yoni exposed more so than in any other of Vajrayogini’s forms. And the picture is a constant contrast of reds and whites. The old symbology both applies and doesn’t apply. It is a lesson in nonduality. Red is blood, female, fire, warmth, passion, and here Vajrayogini’s red is in her background penumbra and even more concentrated in her yoni: The Great Mother’s entryway to her womb of inexhaustible space, creation, and enlightenment. White is supposed to be masculine, semen, life force, and yang energy, but it is also feminine, milk, and amrita, women’s precious orgasmic fluid. White is the absence of colors; white is also the color of the Buddha family to which this Vajrayogini belongs. So this whiteness of hers, here, brings out her connection with the Buddha family. This family represents spaciousness, unconditional indwelling, the white bodhicitta of wisdom and compassion unified. Red is the world of phenomenon and earth, white of the indwelling reality of boundless space.

“For me,” he continued, almost to himself, “she offers me my entrance into the vast, ecstatic emptiness of the womb. I can worship in her what was so dishonored and hurt by my fellow countrymen and me in Vietnam and in all women I once mistreated. My teacher taught me not only to visualize her but also to visualize myself as her. Me as this Vajrayogini! What a blessing! Vajrayogini, my feminine self, leads me into the reality beyond all opposites that is light filled yet empty—or full, unbounded vastness—take your pick, anyway, the womb that is the ever-replenishing nurturer of life and the symbol of enlightenment. Through her womb and yoni, the White Vajrayogini helps me realize her as the mother of true sanity beyond all the craziness and pain of opposites.

“I may also need the white Vajrayogini,” he continued, “for her power to tame and transform me and bring my confused preoccupation with horror back into alignment with the basic purity and sacredness of existence. Though Vajrayogini is usually visualized as red, seeing her as white gives me peace. I’ve seen way, way too much spilled blood. Her whiteness taps into her Buddha family nature, which is perhaps her more basic one that manifests the wisdom of all encompassing space. This is her secret form and secret name.

“I sometimes feel that we Westerners are raping the whole world, so what better figure for me to worship than what is most desecrated—this sacred, most precious, yoni, which is eternal and never changes, though its worldly form gets, got, raped and dishonored. It’s a yoni of transformation and of healing, not of death. That’s all I think I want to say about her.”

My friend put out his hand to take back the picture. He touched the picture to his forehead, kissed it, put it for a minute to his heart, and then reverently replaced it in his wallet.

When I returned to the United States, I searched for a picture like the one the mad monk had but never found one until, a few years later and pregnant with this book, I was looking through, of all things, an old Sotheby’s catalog of Indian and Southeast Asian art and there she was, maybe even more ancient than, but as vibrant as, my friend’s picture.<sup>15</sup> Her power was palpable, a power I sensed but could not quite grasp in the clothed Mahabouddha statue. She really needs to be naked with her yoni the focus of her stance for one to tap into the enormous power of the image. Just seeing her yoni, as in this picture, so beautifully exposed, heals something in my own feminine being and restores its balance. As Tsultrim Allione writes in *Women of Wisdom*:

Ancient goddesses were also portrayed, like the Tantric dakinis, as naked, with exposed, sometimes very vividly painted genitals. The female body in ancient religions was considered sacred, inspiring. The sexual ecstasy that it suggested was also divine. It was not until women themselves were considered profane that the female body was also considered shameful . . . We have no

[strong] images of the feminine to identify with. Our culture has clearly discouraged women from claiming their feminine potency. Women are not given encouragement to see themselves positively when they are assertive and angry. They are taught to be docile and never to threaten.<sup>16</sup>

My maternal forebears, alas, found their bodies, especially “down there,” as they called it, repugnant and a contributor to their poor self-image. It was as if my inherited internal compass had slued off kilter in some unconscious place. Meditating on this image allows me to reclaim the power and beauty of my feminine body. It brings me back into balance with the Great Mother’s yoni as an ever-renewing source of both maya and enlightenment and holds the precious secret of life in the most feminine of forms.

### *Tara*

Tara is my second example of the Great Mother archetype—the Old Woman. She, like Vajrayogini, fulfills her daughters’ needs for a more powerful, many-sided, and complete model of the feminine than that offered by contemporary culture. Tara may be as unfamiliar a figure as Vajrayogini, or the reader may know of her only in her White form as a sort of equivalent to the Virgin Mary, so I need to write a bit about her. Rather than being one-sidedly pure or virtuous, Tara represents the multifaceted creator, nurturer, destroyer Great Mother archetype as well as a female Buddha. Some of Tara’s titles are the Mother of All Buddhas, the Mother Goddess, Goddess of the Underworld, Star of the Heavens, Complete and Perfect Buddha, Goddess of Action, Karma Lady, Female of Deliberate Choice, the Great Protector, Prajnaparamita, the Perfection of Wisdom, Lady of the Animals, Earth Mother, and Compassionate Protector of all Sentient Beings.

Erich Neumann, in *The Great Mother*, calls Tara the Goddess of Spiritual Transformation, and her more monstrous forms (which she certainly has as a complete feminine archetype) he interprets as part of the Terrible Mother archetype. Neumann writes that she seems terrible to us only because we have such trouble accepting the dark

side of ourselves and the afflictions and heartache that come with being human. We find ourselves so alienated because we are in revolt against the full force of life itself, preferring order, logic, control, and stasis: "Wherever the antivital fanaticism of the male spiritual principle predominates, the Feminine is looked upon as negative and evil, precisely in its character of creator, sustainer, and increaser of life . . . This male spirit of consciousness, which desires permanence and not change, eternity and not transformation, law and not creative spontaneity, 'discriminates' against the Great Goddess and turns her into a demon."<sup>17</sup>

So the fiercer forms of Tara and other of the Great Mother archetypes are seen by the Western eye as negative, with the feminine's creative, transformative aspects perverted by projection into something to be mistrusted and controlled. It is as if glaring solar consciousness endeavors to stamp out nighttime and its moon and then mourns their absence.

Ancient Hindu texts use the name Tara alternately with Kali, though by the third century CE Tara had become incorporated in the Mahayana Buddhist pantheon and took on distinctive characteristics. Yet the Hindu mystic Ramakrishna worshiped the Great Mother, ecstatically calling her both names, as did the Bengali poet Ramprasad, who wrote, in praise of the mother, that he seeded his heart with Kali's name and knotted Tara's into his hair.<sup>18</sup> In Mahayana Buddhism, Tara became especially sacred in Tibet, Nepal, and Mongolia. I will rely on Tibetan tales about her to try to bring her to life.

An ancient story relates that, eons ago, Tara, originally an indigent moon goddess and earth mother, assumed human form as Princess Moon of Wisdom. (Here she shows her connection to the matriarchal ancient moon goddess, who is at home in darkness and from whom Tara is luminously born, constant in her inconstancy as she changes according to her phases: dark, new, full, old, and back again.) Princess Moon of Wisdom led a normal courtly life but preferred meditating and gave more and more time to it. She devoted herself to a meditation called Saving All Beings for many long ages and then dedicated herself to defeating all the *maras* (great temptations). Thus she gained the epithets Saviouress, Quick One, and Heroine.



One day, after eons of meditation, Princess Moon Wisdom was in her palace gardens and some monks observed her spiritual practice. They told her they were quite impressed by her commitment and said that, if she prayed harder, in her next lifetime, she could even become a man. Princess Moon Wisdom responded, "Since there is no such thing as a 'man' or a 'woman' . . . this bondage to male and female is hollow: Oh, how worldly fools delude themselves! Those who wish to attain supreme enlightenment in a man's body are many, but those who wish to serve the aims of being in a woman's body are few indeed; therefore may I, until this world is emptied out, serve the aims of beings with . . . the body of a woman."<sup>19</sup>

Another legend has her in the form of a rock ogress or abominable snow lady who, in the most ancient of times, united with a red monkey to give birth to the first six humans, who then peopled Tibet. The rock ogress has been seen as a demonic form of the Earth Mother of the indigenous shamanistic Tibetans and the red monkey as a precursor to the compassionate Indian Bodhisattva, Avoloketesvara, who helped bring Buddhism to Tibet. Here we have a rare example of the new Aryan masculine energy uniting with, rather than defeating, the older matriarchy. There are many images of Tara in human form in the rock caves of Tibet and Nepal from the sixth century on.

In a later, more androcentric, time, a new story arose that is a bit similar to the second, Lilith-less, creation story in Genesis. Rather than being formed from a rib, Tara was now said to have been formed from a tear of Avoloketesvara's. She was seen as his celibate companion, then his wife, and, finally, not only his mother but also, in a merging of the two traditions of Buddhism and goddess religions, the mother of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In later times, Tara was said to be incarnated in the great female Tibetan masters Yeshe Tsogal and Machig Labdron. Both women were not only great teachers but also busy and loving mothers.

All these stories and incarnations can be confusing, especially since there is a practice now of considering any dedicated and dynamic woman to be an incarnation of Tara. Whatever the stories, laypeople and monks alike consider Tara one of their most beloved deities. A sense of this can be gained from the first Dalai Lama's song in praise of her in

her green form. He composed it in about 1447. The song remains very popular and was chanted in pre-1959 Tibet during each day of Lhasa's yearly Great Prayer Festival. I will quote only a few of its verses:

*On a lotus seat, for pure understanding of emptiness,  
Emerald colored, one-faced, two-armed woman,  
In full bloom of youth, right leg out, left drawn in,  
Uniting Method and Wisdom. Homage to You!*

*Prominent full breasts, treasures of undefiled bliss,  
Face with a brilliant smile like the full moon.  
Mother with calm-mannered, wide, compassionate eyes,  
Beauty of the Rosewood Forest. To You I bow!*

*You have found Peace; yet governed by Compassion,  
You swiftly draw out with compassionate hand  
Sentient beings sunk in a sea of suff' rings—  
Mother perfect in Mercy. Homage to You!*

*Your Calming, Increasing, Subduing and Fierce activities,  
Like the tides of the ocean, never late,  
You enter without effort or interruption,  
Mother perfect in Power. Homage to You!<sup>20</sup>*

The Green Tara, to whom the first Dalai Lama composed this praise, is perhaps Tara's most vibrant and important form. Green represents the color of energy and connects her to matter and nature and the earthly round of existence. As such, she is a vegetation goddess and reminds us of the preciousness of our planet's life. Many pictures show her in forested areas and accompanied by flourishing plants and animals. A formal description of this particular picture describes Tara as seated on a lion throne within a shrine; she is represented as the Mother of All Buddhas. Each Buddha is suggested by a different species of bodhi tree surrounding the shrine. Tara personifies the embodiment of wisdom (prajna) and symbolizes the totality of Buddha's enlightenment.<sup>21</sup>



*Green Tara. Cleveland Museum of Art. In Shaw, ed.,  
Leaves from the Bodhi Tree, 330.*

Green is also the color of her Buddha family—the Karma family. Thus, the Green Tara represents skillful action, effective accomplishment, complete wisdom and ease. She destroys what needs to be destroyed and is fierce in subduing all that stands in the way of transformation. The color green also represents the subtle wind that can help one flow in relaxed, natural ease. Air has a light touch but can also

howl and rage; it “is the quintessential force supporting consciousness on its journey from life to life.”<sup>22</sup> The Green Tara thus is called on for protection from danger and evil or to help one confront and be with danger when it is inescapable. Archetypally, Green Tara shares many attributes of the Paleolithic Lady of the Animals, a pre-Aryan Diana, roaming freely in the forest, at home in nature. Therefore, she is honored by secret Tantric hermits and wandering holy people, who also have retreated to inner or outer forests in search of enlightenment. The Green Tara fulfills contemporary women’s heartfelt search for a feminine face of God. She has been compared to the Black Madonna because they both, in Jungian terms, symbolize “the earth, matter, the feminine in man, and the Self in women” and pull us toward her through her compassion.<sup>23</sup> She fulfills our longing to reconnect to this aspect of life and ourselves.

In this post–September 11 world, none of us can, I feel, hold onto a sense that the world is progressing in enlightenment, nor can we shield ourselves from the great suffering around us. Before September 11, 2001, I preferred to cocoon myself in an illusion of safety, but it has been stripped away. I feel deep sadness for our world and all its death-dealing menaces to humans, animals, plants, and planet alike. I am wistful for a safer world and mourn what this cruel age leaves to our children as their inheritance. The low-level depression and unease that I see all about me, and in so many of my patients, calls us to descend in quiet pondering of both our outer and our inner reality. In this darkening world, we can find the Green Tara at home in the dark and speaking to us from the depths. She provides her faint new moonlit promise of peace and enlightenment in the darkness of the world we have made for ourselves. Like the Green Tara, or Princess Moon of Wisdom, or Tara’s human forms, we, too, can commit our passion, energy, and concern to helping all suffering beings, perhaps starting with ourselves.

The White Tara is the second of Tara’s main forms. More of a radiant full-moon goddess than the Green Tara’s dark-of-the-moon, vegetation goddess, the White Tara is called on for health and long life. Her compassionate nature is emphasized by the extra eyes in the palms of her hands and in the soles of her feet as well as the third eye between her eyebrows. They symbolize her constant awareness of



*White Tara. From a wood-block print by Roger Williams. In Beyer, Cult of Tara, frontispiece.*

the suffering in the world and her availability to those, the virtuous and sinners alike, who call on her. Here she is like the Virgin Mary and evokes a similar trust and reverence. They both are believed to know and care about human suffering and, like good mothers, can be counted on to answer our needs.

Tara's red form is more like Vajrayogini than the Virgin Mary. In this form, Tara is sometimes identified with Kurukulla, originally a fierce Indian tribal deity who was later merged with Tara. She is often shown with a lion to represent the fiercely aggressive nature of the female hunting her prey and protecting her young. The Red Tara acts with fiery, dynamic energy as hero and subjugator and protects not only Buddhism but also individual Buddhists from malevolent spirits or forces. She is called on, for example, when a monastery or a nunnery is built, when any enterprise is started, in business, to pass exams, to make roads safe for travel, and to ease the path of lovers. In each case, the red Tara subjugates the human or demonic forces that would impede the venture. A secret, wrathful Red Tara practice was created especially for women. China Galland, who studied both Tara and the Black Madonna, writes that communities where the Red Tara is central are noted for the strength of their women members and the importance given to balanced family life.<sup>24</sup>

The first text ever memorized by a child monk or nun, even before he or she learns to read and write, praises Tara's twenty-one main forms. Each form exemplifies a different aspect of Tara's help. Here are a few excerpts from the twenty-one praises:

*Praise Her, Protectress, The Swift and Courageous Tara  
Whose Look is like a Flash of Lightning*

*Praise Her who sits above the heads of the Buddhas  
Enjoying and abiding in complete and infinite victory*

*Praise Her whose mantric sound of Tutare Hung  
Fills the realms of desire, All directions, all space  
She tramples the seven worlds with her feet  
She has the power to control and summon them all*



*Tara the Ripener. Drawing by Andy Weber.  
In Willson, In Praise of Tara, 146.*

*Praise Her whom Indra, Agni, Vayu, and Brahma  
All the worldly Gods make offerings to Her  
Demons, depraved ones, and all harmful spirits  
Bow in deep and complete surrender to her*

*Praise Her . . .  
Defeating the snares and schemes of enemies  
With right leg folded, and left leg outstretched  
Shining in splendor midst a fierce blazing fire*

*Praise the One who is bliss, virtue, and peace  
Her activity is the peace beyond suffering  
With the pure sounds of Om and Soha  
She purifies all negativity and guilt.*

*Praise Her Blazing like a fire at the end of time  
Abiding in the center of a garland of flames  
Her left leg folded, Her right leg outstretched  
Giving joy to the prayerful, All obstacles are subdued.*



*Tara the Great Peaceful One. Drawing by Andy Weber.  
In Willson, In Praise of Tara, 149.*

*Praise Her the swift One . . .  
She stamps Her feet shaking the greatest mountain peaks.  
Mt. Kailash, Mt. Mandara and Meru,  
The three worlds tremble beneath Her dancing feet.*

*Praise the One who holds the moon in her hand  
A heavenly ocean reflecting the peaceful deer  
She chants the syllables of Tare Tare Pe  
With this blessing all poisons are transformed*



*Praise Her the One on whom the celestial rulers rely  
The shining ones and spirits, make offerings to Her  
Joyously protecting, She is radiant with light  
Dispelling quarrels and nightmares, She ends all war.<sup>25</sup>*

These twenty-one praises of Tara hold special relevance for me. Every year or two I try to take part in a seven- to ten-day Tibetan Buddhist retreat. The silence, and the chance to spend long periods in meditation, meets a deep need in me, as does my connection with a trusted teacher. Together, they provide me time to listen to my deeper self, a chance to check on my shadow and to look at all the things that pull me away from my center, a chance to refocus and ground myself. What I often miss at the particular retreats I attend, however, is some strong feminine presence in a leadership position, as well as some conscious inclusion of the body, whether in comfort, movement, or as part of our daily prayer. So it was with great joy that late one summer several years ago, I discovered that a woman named Prema Dasara had



*Tara the Perfecter. Drawing by Andy Weber.  
In Willson, In Praise of Tara, 160.*

joined us.<sup>26</sup> A trained temple dancer and choreographer, she had just returned from India, where she had presented a dance she had choreographed in honor of Tara to the Dalai Lama. Tara had been given to her as her *yidam*, and as my teacher was teaching from a White Tara text that year and we were doing the White Tara practice in our daily chanting, it was fitting that she was there.

Prema Dasara arrived, not with a sleeping bag and a minimum of supplies, like the rest of us, but with a great trunk filled with Indian saris and costume jewelry! She planned to teach her mandala dance in praise of the twenty-one forms of Tara to some of the women. There were not twenty-one of us who agreed to dance, but those who did were each assigned one or more forms of Tara to embody. During our rest periods, we took our place and learned the simple steps of the mandala dance.

Most of the dance was quite formal as we wove in and out, making intricate and quite beautiful mandalas with the changing patterns of our combined bodies. In our solos, however, we stood in the center of the mandala and then stepped out from it to improvise the essence of the Tara form we were given. In order to perform the dance and do our respective improvisations, Dasara instructed us to meditate on Tara during the week so that everything we saw with our eyes became part of Tara's body, all we heard, part of her speech, and all our thoughts, an expression of Tara's divine wisdom. We were also to meditate on our particular form of Tara, visualize her, and then let it dance us from the inside out. We were not to dance Tara out of some intellectual understanding of her, or some artistic skill, but were to surrender ourselves to her energy and become her. We practiced daily and then, dressed in the vivid saris and the jewelry appropriate to our special form of Tara, we danced the mandala dance as our offering at the end of the retreat. It was a delight to forget our respective ages, body size, grace, or lack thereof, and let our bodies become infused with the Old Woman's energy and have our bodies be our meditation and prayer.

The body and its ability to contain and to move in and as sacred space has been debased or ignored along with the feminine in patriarchal times. So many of us have forgotten the Old Woman's body

knowledge, what it is to be at home in our bodies, let alone allowing them to move freely. Returning to the Great Mother, honoring her this way, resacralizes the body and brings a sacred freedom and vitality that also encompasses and honors the round of life and our precious worldly existence. When I reviewed a very amateurish video someone had taken of our dance, I was moved to tears. It was clear when we were being our old self-conscious, clunky, or performing selves and when we tapped into our female Tara essence. Suddenly, one then another of us seemed enlarged somehow, or clearer, and looked as if she were emanating light, as Tara is said to, and every now and then, our bodies were moved to incredible grace and power. This was healing in and of itself, and I cannot recommend more strongly that both men and women regain the feeling of sacred earthed and spirit-enhancing vitality through this sort of Active Imagination in dance form. It is one of the gifts of the Old Woman to her daughters and sons.

I started this chapter with three illustrations from the visions of Christiana Morgan, whom I consider a foremother in her search for strong feminine images. I will conclude with a later vision Morgan wrote out but did not draw. In it she followed an animus guide



*Prema Dasara's 21 Praises of Tara mandala dance.*

through a little door at the base of an idol. “Within was the statue of a primitive woman sitting cross-legged. The woman had many breasts.” Morgan called her “loathsomely archaic,” but nonetheless wanted the primitive woman brought up into the light of day. The animus demurred, stating, “This must not be shown,” and the visioner conceded and left her sitting back there in the dark.<sup>27</sup>

Jung, in most of four lectures, led an extensive and far-ranging discussion of this vision.<sup>28</sup> He defined the primitive woman as an ugly archaic figure from the collective unconscious that was forcing itself up into consciousness—“an absolutely negative figure of the divine mother.”<sup>29</sup> He equated her with an equally negative Kali, though he also acknowledged her “essentially feminine creative nature.”<sup>30</sup> In the following lecture, Jung compared the figure with other archaic mother figures. In each case, they appeared grotesque, primitive, and often obscene—loathsomely archaic. “So these figures suggest something exceedingly strange and remote, denoting they are almost inaccessible to personal experience.”<sup>31</sup>

Jung asked the women at the seminar if they could recognize the image in their own psychology. Only Barbara Hannah (the woman in my dream who gave me the compost-heap papers) replied that she could, but then wished she had not, stating, after Jung urged her to speak more: “I would rather not. It hits one in one’s most vulnerable spot. It seems to me to be a primordial image coming up from under one’s shadow. It is awfully involved, I wish I had not begun on it.”<sup>32</sup>

Jung then spoke of the danger of not accepting this figure and not bringing her into the light of day. Keeping her repressed in the unconscious or projected out onto women in images of the Terrible Mother could cause great psychic damage. However, he also warned of the danger of accepting the destructive sides of the Mother archetype. It was as if, when faced with this archaic feminine power, Jung could find no safe response. He concluded the discussion by stating that it was primarily a negative image but that he also thought Morgan was wrong to pass it by: “Yes, she passed her, neglected her, she did not sacrifice to her in any way. In such a case, a negative content becomes more negative. People who disregard the chthonic factor are injured by the chthonic factor.”<sup>33</sup>

As the visions continued, Morgan's failure to deal with this primitive figure resulted in her being caught by a sort of rock ogress who wanted to extinguish the light Morgan was carrying and who essentially swallowed her up by imprisoning her inside the rock. It was as if Morgan, and her culture as a whole, needed to return to the dark, the primitive, and the shadowy to integrate them better into consciousness rather than projecting them out onto others. I find it profoundly moving that Jung—though so mistrustful of the snake, Kali, and this sort of chthonic feminine power—saw that it needed attention and even respect. He and the class, as well as the visioner herself, soon passed by this fierce, dark, murky, potentially evil, potentially redeeming, yet primitive, example of the Old Woman.

Before they left this archaic feminine power, Jung made the hair-raising connection between Morgan's failure to meet her and make her conscious with Germany's failure: "the problem is not only her personal problem but it is also a national problem."<sup>34</sup> He then discussed the rise of the Third Reich in 1933 Germany and the outbreak of violence against the Jews. He hazarded that Germany at that time was both inflated with, and possessed by, the unconscious power of the suppressed archaic feminine. Neither he nor the class realized that the upheaval they were discussing would—this feminine power rejected, unclaimed, and repressed—be acted out in the violent fury of the Holocaust and World War II. Jung concluded that these particular visions "denote the transition from one state of consciousness into another,"<sup>35</sup> and he openly worried about what might prove to be a chaotic and fearsome transition.

Morgan struggled with a personal problem that echoed a national and collective one: how to deal with the long-repressed chthonic feminine in a way that would integrate part of its split-off contents and would transform, rather than destroy, life. Neither she nor, it seems, civilization was quite ready for it. In many ways, this problem still appears in my consulting room. That is why I have been at such pains here to provide a more complete example of the Old Woman in the more consciously developed figures of Vajrayogini and Tara and to ponder ways she can regain and exert her power constructively. This

leads me to the next chapter, but before I end, I would like to quote a poem I wrote a few months after September 11 that struggles to meet the Old Woman in a more constructive way:

SOLSTICE, 2001

*The longest night of a very long year  
It's starless and cold  
I hope the coyotes howl in the hills  
Close behind me  
And the Great Horned Owl with her maniacal scream  
Returns to her perch in my lodgepole pine*

*I plan to spend the night  
Honoring all that's dark and afflicted  
Cast down and drags on forever  
There's no way the sun will return  
We've lost too much  
And sorrow beats on my door  
In anguish and despair*

*A child for instance:  
How many—newly orphaned—  
Cry themselves to sleep tonight  
Whether in New York, Guatemala  
Or Afghanistan?  
I'll not bring up the agony so many creatures  
Endure at this moment in time  
Nor the weight of ages of grief*

*And Lilith—just one of her names—  
Howls outside our latest camp for refugees  
Or prisoners.  
Our earth's been gutted and gutted again  
She rages on interminably this hated other  
Warriors and virtuous women alike shut their ears*

*Yet, if she came into my canded circle  
Right now  
I'd fall on my knees and comfort her  
Her eyes burning with outrage  
At all she knows and has experienced  
With no one to hear*

*I'd listen*

*Dare I say I know how she feels  
Brought low, defeated, exiled  
This darkest core of my being  
I know her in the pit of my gut  
Where we've all been kicked hard  
By one horror or another*

*She forces me inward and down  
Deep below depression  
To endure  
Her harsh abysmal divinity  
"Archaically loathsome" they called her  
That other most hated and despised  
By those who venerate the light*

*I welcome her this solstice night  
I have grown to love her power and passion  
And ache for her infinite sorrow  
We sit in silence across from each other  
As, from deep within her womb,  
A golden snake with emerald eyes  
Leaps like a current of energy between us  
And glides lightning fast into my ancient belly  
As if it recognized home*

*A dark infant conceived woman to woman  
This darkest night of a very dark year.*



## CHAPTER 3

# *Cherishment*

## A Different Way of Doing Therapy and Being in the World

We humans are social beings. We come into the world as a result of others' actions. We survive here in dependence on others. Whether we like it or not, there is hardly a moment of our lives in which we do not benefit from others' activities. For this reason it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness arises in the context of our relationship with others. Nor is it so remarkable that our greatest joy should come when we are motivated by concern for others.

—The Dalai Lama

In Chapter 1, I discuss inherited views of the feminine and some of the ways they kept the serpent—the powerful and chthonic aspects of the feminine—and the beautiful young girl—the evolving potential of the feminine—from full expression and development. In Chapter 2, I focus on the Old Woman through reimagining the archetypal Mothers and presenting models of the feminine from cultures that were able to keep some ancient, more inclusive and matriarchal, components alive alongside the new patriarchal energy.



These models have become very attractive to a growing number of Western women who have been drawn to Buddhism.<sup>1</sup> They can be compelling to anyone who seeks to transfigure the undeveloped snake and girl of our culture's recent past. If internalized, they help reclaim feminine potency. In this chapter, my aim is to present ways the Old Woman can be incorporated and to demonstrate how her influence shapes and changes both therapy and one's relation in the world. My focus here challenges the Western ideal of development through a self-determined striving toward individualistic autonomy where what is not acceptable can be split off and demonized. Instead, I emphasize the connections we create with each other and with the world, as well as the new and often-healing meanings that can arise out of this more comprehensive mutuality. In therapy, these connections are often termed transference or countertransference and are a phenomenon that, I believe, occurs in all relationships. As Hans Loewald describes them, they are "the inextricable intertwinings with others, in which individual life originates and remains throughout the life of the individual in numberless elaborations, derivatives, and transformations."<sup>2</sup>

Here is an example of reclaiming some of the power of the Old Woman through relationship. A successful woman in her late forties whom I will call Alison had been in analysis some years earlier but felt incomplete and still suffered from a sense of being adrift. She also suffered from a mother wound that left her knowing how to be the anima-like girl she had outgrown, but also left her with little self-esteem and no sense of how to be a woman—or even, really, what a woman was. After her first session with her new female analyst, Alison dreamed that she was in a beautiful, lush, but unfamiliar jungle area, probably in a South American rain forest. She found herself on one of the lower branches of a large, heavy-limbed tree. But, to her terror, she felt great paws pressing her down and claws digging into her if she tried to move. It seems she had no choice but to keep still and submit. A creature had captured her, dragged her up onto the tree branch, and would tear her apart! Or so she thought. But then she felt a rough tongue licking her, and she dared glance at her supposedly trapped self and at the creature. The creature was a large black female panther

rather ferociously grooming her, and Alison was not the driven and rather brittle woman she knew herself to be, but a baby panther surrendering to and contained within the mother panther's fierce but tender love.

A first dream often prefigures what the psyche needs for its healing and images the course of therapy. Here it was clear that, in the analysis that would follow, Alison needed a relational experience with the Old Woman and her kind of feminine solicitude. She needed to be with a woman who had developed her own intrinsic feminine nature apart from conventional expectations. She also needed to experience her physical and animal nature in an embodied way that her upbringing had not permitted—all this as the psychological daughter of the Old Woman. She needed to know the fierce, active aspect of the feminine as embodied in Vajrayogini, Tara, or the Kundalini Shakti. And she needed to know not just intellectually but firsthand in a relationship with a therapist who might cuff her around like a panther would cuff its cub, but who could and would lovingly contain her and teach her, often through example, how to be a woman and navigate the world securely and in a more natural and authentic way.

Think how a mother panther trains her young. She licks and grooms her cubs into an understanding of their physical selves and bodily needs. She is fierce in her training, too, so they learn to understand danger and to protect themselves and fight if they need to. She teaches them the lay of the land—how to find water and food, how to do what a natural panther does. She often teaches through play as she stalks and then is stalked by her cubs, as she allows them to chase her tail, pounce on her, use her as the focus of their growing skills. And at night, or in repose, her body shields and contains the cub, which nestles against the warmth and comfort of the mother's great beating heart. Alison needed this kind of cherishing, example, and kinesthetic education translated into therapeutic work to redeem her womanly essence.

A dream that came sometime after this showed part of Alison's journey that lay in the past and to which she connected her personal mother. This time, the dream was about house cats and was so real that Alison woke up in tears and confusion. It seems that in the dream

she thought she had three cats: a big black mama cat (whose great, yet relaxed, energy Alison connected with the panther's) and two marmalade siblings, one a little older than the other. But when she went back she could not find the mother cat and, after searching high and low, found instead that she must have, in the dream, only been dreaming of the big mother cat, for she had only the two marmalade cats now, and the older kitten was the mother of the younger one. "But this is all wrong," Alison felt. "How can a little female like this care for the smaller one? And where, oh where, is the great mother cat I'd seen so vividly?" Alison felt great agitation and loss.

In working on the dream later in therapy, she realized that her own mother, no matter how well intentioned, was like the older sibling cat. She had tried to mother Alison the best she could and certainly loved her. However, the mother came from a lineage of women who mistrusted their own natures and adapted themselves almost completely to the world of the fathers and to masculine values. Alison's mother, like so many mothers, had no connection with a Motherline or with the Old Woman and no idea of how to help either Alison or herself, except through conforming to what was expected or "right" and keeping masculine approval as her criterion. She cared for Alison by training her to be nice and to oblige. The mother monitored Alison's weight, looks, and popularity in the hope she would find a successful man, the same way the mother had, even though this had not led to much happiness or fulfillment for her. It was the best the mother knew how to do, yet it had filled Alison with rage and contempt and an odd, wordless sense of betrayal. Alison cried a lot in the office that day as she felt the full realization of what it was like to have an older sibling as a mother rather than the panther or the fully adult mama cat or woman. "I come from generations of girls," she lamented, "and I need so much more."

I've been seeing patients since the 1970s—well before I reconnected with the Old Woman. My own first unconscious attempt at reunion was my interest in early mother-infant bonding and in less-stressful, more-natural and supportive ways of childbirth—both my own and others.' This led to a study project in the 1960s and, later, to over ten years teaching relaxation and childbirth classes and helping

by supporting mothers during delivery as what I believe is now called a “doula.”

In my own analysis, I discovered that one reason for this absorption was my strong, unconscious urge to remother and rebirth myself within a Motherline of embodied mothering, midwives, doulas—we were learning, teaching, and demonstrating a different way of caring for oneself and one’s children. This was, back then, a heresy in the Fatherline’s antiseptic, body-averse, doctor and hospital way of treating women who were giving birth. It was perhaps my first attempt to reclaim both my personal Grandmother and the forgotten matriarchal wisdom that is so needed now to balance, complete, and revivify the world of the fathers.

Looking back at those years of teaching and then of doing therapy or analysis, I am concerned about how few women had and have a connection with the Motherline. The majority are like Alison, though with, perhaps, less good-enough mothering, more or less neurosis, and more or less capacity to make it in the world. Their mothers, most often, were not monsters but were often fearful and lacking self-confidence, disconnected from themselves and from their daughters. They tended to project all their disallowed power and fierceness onto what they thought men should be. Robbed of these qualities, many were filled with shame and self-hatred. They often felt trapped in overwork (if they tried to juggle home and job) or trapped in domesticity (if they had all the child-rearing and housekeeping tasks to cover). These women also tried to stay girlish, as if that was the right model for women. For them, youth equaled femininity. Without the Old Woman, they were, alas, incapable of providing themselves or their children adequate grounding in any sense of a feminine Self. Because these women were so fragile in their own ability to mother themselves, their daughters often received a harsh, critical, negative animus instead: the voice that says you cannot or, if you do, you are never good enough, pretty enough, smart enough. Many of them believed and had internalized the dictum that they and their daughters were second-class citizens in a man’s world.

So therapy often begins with the search for the equivalent of the big black mother cat of Alison’s dream. The therapist can be mindful

of the panther sitting by her chair and do no better than imagine and hold alive the sense that part of her is mother panthering the patient's child-self back to her own instinctual vigor and at-homeness with her bodily self. One of the best ways of doing this is silently watching one's own body and breath, being sure one is sitting comfortably and relaxed, and clearing all one's senses so they can focus attentively on the other and the meaning and feelings hidden in her signals. This means allowing one's left brain to be actively attuned to the dreams, images, associations, patterns of speech, bodily movements, and gestures happening in both the patient and the therapist and the flow or energy between them, while one's right brain relaxedly attunes itself to the field—the *umvelt*—being created in the room. It reminds me of the way a cat stays quietly relaxed yet acutely observant in its awareness.

Let me give you a quick overview of some other therapists who have touched on some of the elements I am talking about. This way of being with a patient is far from conventional forms of analysis and from the popular form of object relations that, at least in Southern California, are so often mind centered and focused on verbal interpretations—all as if the therapist knows rather than listens and questions. In contrast, I want to follow some of the panther's and her relatives' tracks.

About thirty years ago, the Japanese psychoanalyst Takeo Doi wrote two short books translated as *The Anatomy of Self* and *The Anatomy of Dependence*. In these books and various articles, Doi writes of the need and right for children, patients, and all of us to have what he calls *amae*—the expectation of being loved and cared for. He finds that the Japanese accept their children's need for dependency much more than Westerners do; the latter seem, instead, to push their children toward independence. D. W. Winnicott has written of primary narcissism: the need for an infant to be accepted and loved just for who she or he is, with no ifs or whens.<sup>3</sup> Winnicott also notes the mutuality in the mother-infant interaction, with each taking pleasure in the give-and-take, and their often nonverbal communication. He emphasizes the importance of this acceptance and mutuality in order for the infant to be able to learn to self-soothe. It is like the mother panther purring as she grooms her cub and the complete safety, containment, and body pleasure of the cub surrendering to the mother.

Frieda Fromm-Reichmann believed that clinical healing took place through the loving concern of the analyst and only when patients could shed their armor and acknowledge their rightful claim to their early childhood dependency needs.<sup>4</sup> Jung, as I mention in the first chapter, wrote of having to let go of his official persona at a critical time in his life and allowing himself to play as a child would play. In later life, he used alchemy as a metaphor for analysis and wrote of the need for *dissolutio*: a time and a space to dissolve all the hardened, congealed accretions the ego has erected to try to defend itself from infantile chaos, suffering, and inevitable wounds. This step is usually possible only in an interpersonal field. There are two workers in alchemy: the *artifex* and the *soror mystica* or *frater mysticus*. The pair, like the therapist-patient pair, watches carefully as the psyche lets the personality dissolve, reconstitute, and transform. This involves the same conscientious attention with which the alchemist, and the therapist, tend the *vas* of therapy so that the processes of greening—allowing a new way of being to emerge—and the *rubedo*—the reddening acceptance of both love and suffering—can take place. This allows new life forces to constellate and emerge, and the once-deadened or -suppressed sensation and feeling a safe place to bloom.

An example of *amae* and Jung's indulgence of a patient that is especially dear to me happened early in his professional career at the Burgholzi, the famous psychiatric hospital where he first worked.<sup>5</sup> Jung tells the story of a sad, mostly catatonic, serving girl from some rural spot in Switzerland who had come to Zurich to work but broke down and was taken to the Burgholzi. Jung deduced that she had collapsed because she was completely at sea away from her simple backwater, the people she knew and understood and who knew and understood her. He treated his patient in a way that would not be possible today, but the feeling tone is pure *amae*. Jung perceived that words from the impressive, educated doctor would only further bewilder her. Instead, he sat the young girl on his lap and started to sing the peasant folk songs he had learned as a child living in a similar rural backwater. She relaxed to the familiar tunes and the comfort of his fatherly lap, and they spent their time together singing. Jung reported that that was all that was needed to put her back in tune with herself.

She could relax in the indulgent almost prelinguistic attunement Jung constellated and then return home with her sense of herself and her reality restored.

Another example is from a biography of Jung in which the author quotes a depressed patient in mid-analysis who had just suffered a great tragedy. The patient came to an analytic session with Jung and recalled, “I had nothing to say that day. I took my seat [in the library]. He pulled his chair close to mine. I did not want to meet his eyes, so we both stared ahead at the books on the wall. I could not speak, so neither did he. Occasionally he reached to stroke my arm or pat my hand. The hour passed and I became tranquil. I wish that peace would come with me when I leave, but it disappears without his presence.”<sup>6</sup>

Jung often wrote that the influence between patient and doctor “must be dialectical” and that the treatment had to be one of mutual influence: “if there is any combination at all, both are transformed.”<sup>7</sup> Theory had its place, but the meeting between two individuals, their connection, relationship, and effect on each other, was paramount. “The patient, that is to say, can win his own inner security only from the security of his relationship to the doctor as a human being.”<sup>8</sup>

Many French feminists, such as Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, and Catherine Clément, have written of the need for this sort of attunement and for a feminine sort of therapy in which joy, *jouissance*, and play heal, and in which images and metaphor form a curative language between analyst and patient.<sup>9</sup> This language meets both the rational self and the wounded, split-off, neurotic or mad parts of the self and helps them reconstitute. This, as Cixous and Clément write in *The Newly Born Woman*, recaptures the Imaginary—the first world of a well-mirrored infant who affirms himself or herself through relation to the body of the mother. The relational field between analyst and patient not only contains and structures the competing energies but also expresses itself in feeling. From this, Cixous and Clément conclude, a woman becomes a true I, “a whole living woman,” the “woman . . . I can love,” and from there comes the strong desire for community, for other women who love themselves, who “are not debased, overshadowed, wiped out.”<sup>10</sup>

In their theorizing and in their therapy, the psychoanalysts, clinicians, and teachers gathered in the Stone Center at Wellesley College have been reframing developmental and psychoanalytic thought to include the importance of the relational self and connectedness.<sup>11</sup> Their focus on women's needs and women's experience has allowed them to perceive a different model of development and maturity from the growth in separation, mastery, and personal independence model so valued in traditional Western intellectual and psychoanalytic thought. The Stone Center's theorizing enriches psychology by looking at and valuing women's strengths and the qualities of mutuality, connection, and empathic relating as indicators of healthy development and maturity. Both the clinical work and theory coming from the Stone Center validate women's experience and promote a relational pattern of growth that enriches both self and other.

Daniel Stern and Daniel Goleman have written about the rediscovery of the importance of feelings both in therapy and in infant development. In *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, Stern summarizes his long-term studies of mother-infant interactions and reports that their repeated, mostly nonverbal, exchanges form the basic blueprint for a child's capacity to be compassionate, loving, and empathic. This happens through the mother's attunement to the baby and through the baby's emotions being accepted, met, and reciprocated with empathic attention. Daniel Goleman, in a chapter entitled "The Roots of Empathy" in his best seller *Emotional Intelligence*, echoes Stern's findings. Goleman traces the roots of empathy to the ability to accurately read nonverbal signals. He concludes that this ability is learned from having one's own feelings accurately mirrored by another (usually the mother). This, in the best of circumstances, happens in infancy but can be learned through specific school programs and through a truly empathic therapist.

In another context, in *Awakening the Buddhist Heart*, Lama Surya Das writes of the importance of relationship and feelings in spiritual practice. But he goes farther, as can be seen from the subtitle of his book: *Integrating Love, Meaning, and Connection into Every Part of Your Life*. Rather than just writing about these values, Lama Surya Das fills his book with teaching stories and exercises that help one uncover and develop the intrinsic awakened heart of unconditional love and



unselfish caring. The *amae* that Doi found in mother-child interactions, Surya Das finds in Buddhism in the relationship with a loving teacher and in the Bodhisattva ideal: one who lives to cherish others. His emphasis goes beyond cultivating inner wisdom and cherishment of oneself out into the world through one's Buddha Nature's (what Jung would call the Self's) heart connection with all sentient beings.

Nancy Chodorow stresses the individual, subjective meanings all of us bring to our experience of what it means to be human. *The Power of Feelings* focuses on the importance of connection in, and by means of, the mutual field of the transference-countertransference: the ongoing connection between two people. She sees transference and countertransference occurring in every human interaction, but therapy gives it a clearer field from which it can be examined. Through this, therapy allows a person the invaluable opportunity to create healthier personal and intersubjective connections in a shared and protected field of relationship. Chodorow enlarges the scope of analysis by subsuming theory to the ever-changing reality of the individual, which the analyst and patient can explore together. They investigate the creation and remaking of unconscious psychic reality, and also "the power of feelings . . . and the way we create personal meaning and . . . explore the use and generation of intersubjective, cultural, and social meaning in that process of creation."<sup>12</sup> In this, Chodorow sounds very Jungian, and I am reminded of what Jung wrote in 1935 in "Principles of Practical Psychotherapy": "A person is a psychic system which, when it affects another person, enters into reciprocal reaction with another psychic system . . . Since individuality . . . is absolutely unique, unpredictable, and uninterpretable . . . the therapist must abandon all his preconceptions . . . In other words, the therapist is no longer the agent of treatment but a fellow participant in a process of individual development."<sup>13</sup>

I have written about Jungian analysts who explored and revalued the feminine.<sup>14</sup> Much valuable work on this important subject has been done since this was published in 1990. The analyst Marion Woodman, for example, celebrates the feminine power of what she calls the Dark Goddess archetype as seen in the Black Madonna and in some Tibetan and Buddhist deities engaged in the ecstatic dance of

transformation.<sup>15</sup> Her powerful descriptions recall the feminine deities I refer to in Chapter 2. Woodman even has an unnamed Vajrayogini-like figure on the cover of the uncorrected galleys of her book.<sup>16</sup> Woodman has long nurtured the feminine side of analysis. She can be seen as the Godmother for a Motherline of therapists and analysts working on the cherishing of connection, the reclamation of the powerful feminine, and on good panthering. This Motherline includes, along with Woodman, Jungian analysts Naomi Lowinsky, Barbara Stevens Sullivan, Ellen Siegelman, and Clarissa Pinkola Estés. In my discussion of the Motherline, I will also include a book I recently discovered by two Freudian therapists: Elisabeth Young-Bruehl and Faith Bethelard, and make brief mention of the neuroscientific research of a British Jungian analyst, Margaret Wilkinson, who connects what I term “cherishment” with reparative brain functioning.

Naomi Lowinsky wrote a pivotal book, *Stories from the Motherline*, about her own family and the value she places on her subjective experience, the flesh and blood of her search for her female roots. She writes of the healing it brought to her and brings to other women when they engage in the same search in therapy. Lowinsky criticizes both the psychology she was taught and contemporary psychology for blaming the mother for what is, instead, the archetypal Mother—both a good and a terrible energy. She finds that this approach blames the personal mother for what Lowinsky calls fate or the reality of life. It is, in her words, “a psychological fantasy . . . of some sort of ideal childhood that dehumanizes and inflates our mothers.”<sup>17</sup> The antidote is

to include our mothers’ stories in telling our stories [which] undercuts a collective fantasy we hold about the perfectibility of childhood. Psychology, in trying to be a science . . . kills off the gods, who used to hold responsibility for our fates. We institute mothers in their place, and rage at them for all the negative things that befall us. But no mother sets out to hurt her children. She has her own limitations, those the culture imposes, and she has her fate. Today mothers suffer the collective wound of being seen as the perpetrators of all suffering.<sup>18</sup>

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Lowinsky writes of the experience of knowing this, yet being able to sit with and cherish patients who are swamped by grief and anger at their own mother wounds as she herself once was at a stage in her own analysis. She steps back and concludes that the personal root of the pain is a collective fear of the Great Mother and her savaging (the terror that Alison felt in her dream when first in the panther's claws). Yet alongside the archetypal dread of the terrible side of the Great Mother, Lowinsky acknowledges an intensely personal, yet sociocultural, reality: "We are all born of deeply wounded mothers, who, in turn, were born into a culture that feared and excoriated the feminine. The face of our mother turned to us in rage or frustration, or away from us in deep depression, is the face of what woman have suffered."<sup>19</sup> Lowinsky's book and her therapy seek to reestablish feminine interconnectedness and find a "cultural mirror in which to envision the fullness of female development," which can also give us "images of female wisdom and maturity."<sup>20</sup>

Barbara Stevens Sullivan, in an essential book on the therapeutic process, *Psychotherapy Grounded in the Feminine Principle*, finds that even the way we do therapy is negatively conditioned by the culture's devaluation of the feminine principle. Her book stands as a strong argument for reclaiming the vitality and power of the Old Woman's feminine energy in our clinical work. Sullivan makes clear that she is not writing of men and women but of masculine and feminine energies present within all of us. Her feminine mode of psychotherapy feels very much like my description of the panther and the mother cat. She calls it an "experience of immersing oneself in one's situation as a means of being conscious of it . . . rather than being guided by the mind, the whole personality, down to its animal and vegetable elements, is involving itself in the process."<sup>21</sup> This leads to a contained and cherishing being with the patient rather imposing one's own theories or interpretations.

The heart of therapy for Sullivan takes place through "an emotionally charged relationship" in which "the partnership between two individuals, patient and therapist, mirrors each person's inner partnership with his self."<sup>22</sup> This relational model then provides a container

in which patient and therapist act together as a unit to create or re-create whatever the patient's psyche needs to address. Because of who they are together, they then can modify and heal the patient's internal dysfunctional images of relationship, replacing disconnection with connection.

Sullivan writes of love, of holding, of nursing, of containing as a feminine way of doing therapy. It is an attitude firmly within the Motherline in that it "invites the therapist to identify with the midwife and to position himself in such a way as to facilitate the birth of the patient's self."<sup>23</sup> She echoes Jung's conclusion that neuroses arise in order to avoid suffering; in contrast, Sullivan proposes that the ability to bear the suffering implicit in the human condition is a healing, deepening, and enlivening act that leads to wholeness.

Jo Wheelwright, in his appreciation of Sullivan's work, calls her inclusion of the feminine principle essential not only in therapy but also in demonstrating its "commitment to humanity, to life, and to the future which is the only possible hope for the continuance of life on this planet."<sup>24</sup> As such, it is a fervent appeal for the return of the Old Woman and what she can offer us.

Ellen Siegelman writes of psychotherapy as a healing language made up by patient and therapist together, with reference points taken from dream images and metaphor.<sup>25</sup> (This is similar to what the French post-Lacanian feminist psychoanalysts call the Imaginary. These women were writing concurrently, or even synchronistically, about the ways a feminine sensibility changes the doing of therapy.) Siegelman finds metaphor to be a natural language of the psyche and a way in which the patient and the analyst better attune themselves to each other. It is also a form in which they play. Siegelman quotes Winnicott: "Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together."<sup>26</sup> Siegelman describes the end goal as helping patients recover their inner music. It can only be rediscovered through patient and therapist allowing each other to be open to resonance. She states that this "resonance is the affect and the communication from unconscious to unconscious. It is everything that cannot be revealed in a bare transcript: It is the tone of voice, the

facial expressions and body language, the web of connotation that a particular word touches off in patient and therapist, who jointly develop a common idiom. This resonance creates the ripples that radiate out from what the patient reveals.”<sup>27</sup>

In 2002, Siegelman published a short article titled “The Analyst’s Love: An Exploration,” in which she notes the paucity of sources on this subject. She briefly surveys what she has found, citing Ferenczi’s attention to the field so alive between patient and therapist, and the importance of intersubjectivity, though she rues his breaking of the safe boundaries needed by a patient. She credits Balint and Kernberg for their feelings, and discussion, of “tenderness” and the British object-relations theorists who propose parent-child love as a model for analysis in which a dependent regression can safely be contained. She acknowledges Jung for noting and encouraging the intensity of the field between patient and analyst, especially in “Psychology of the Transference,” where Jung describes the heat of the process that is necessary to transform them both. Harold Searles is even more outspoken in his acceptance of owning yet containing his feelings of both loving and erotic energy as prerequisites for the patients’ psychological healing and growth.<sup>28</sup> At the end of her brief discussion, Siegelman quotes Bryce Boyer, a student of Searles’s: “I have come to believe that in a successful analysis, the analyst develops a form of deep love for his patient, one that has maternal and paternal aspects. The love is never stated directly or acted out . . . Nevertheless, the love is experienced by the analysand and introjected as a good, but not idealized, internal object.”<sup>29</sup>

Siegelman is careful to differentiate this love from sentimental sweetness or the cloying falseness of the all-good mother. She concludes that the love is a “knowing” love that not only respects and embraces the whole being of the person and his or her potential—what Jung terms the Self—but must also contain the possibility of hate when that Self’s dark side is no longer repressed, but not yet contained, and assaults the analyst or others in the patient’s life. This is an essential part of reintegrating the powerful feminine energies I write of in Chapter 2 and why I started this chapter with the image of a panther’s love. The all-good mother, or analyst, is false and repels

the authentic psyche and does far more harm than good. The authentic analyst, in contrast, knows the fierce, hateful, even mad aspects of her own and the patient's psyches, yet can contain them in caring attention to the totality of the Self.

I feel very close to Ellen Siegelman because of her interest in the subject of the analyst's love and her clear portrayal of the elements essential in analysis—whether metaphor, attention to nonverbal rhythms and cues, or love—that so often go unaddressed in our literature. Synchronistically, as I was reworking this chapter in early 2003 and writing about Young-Bruehl and Bethelard, Siegelman was reading *Cherishment: A Psychology of the Heart*, which she reviewed for the *San Francisco Jung Institute Library Journal*. She found in that book many of the same values I did and had some of the same reservations. She also embraced the term “cherishment,” finding it a better name for what she had been calling “agape.”

The authors of *Cherishment* start where Takeo Doi leaves off and attempt to convert his very Japanese understanding of the patient's need for *amae*—indulgence, or “baby love”—into a theory more useful to psychotherapists in the West. The heart of Young-Bruehl and Bethelard's book is the premise that therapy works through feelings and love rather than interpretation; thus, contained by the feelings and love present in the transference-countertransference, patients can reexperience (or experience for the first time) their right to feel safely helpless and to be carefully and lovingly tended in the same way I have described a baby panther being nurtured by its mother. They quote Doi on the essence of *amae*: “*Amae* itself is an emotion that is constituted tacitly. It is telepathic, prelinguistic, and does not need the medium of language. It is communicated directly from heart to heart,”<sup>30</sup> and is the emotion (or expectation) that motivates a person, however unconsciously, into analysis.

Another concept vital to *Cherishment* is the Taoist one of *wu wei*, translated by Young-Bruehl and Bethelard as “not doing” but more accurately meaning something like doing gently or doing without force or moving as water moves. The authors take it to mean leading “by example, by being who you are.”<sup>31</sup> For me, *wu wei* in analysis would mean being like the cat or the panther: harmonizing with where one

finds oneself and the way things are. It would mean, as Jung says,<sup>32</sup> giving up or forgetting all we have learned and being with the patient without ideas, concepts, judgments, or even a desire for a good outcome—attentively attuned and going with the flow.

Young-Bruehl and Bethelard's book is written in a feminine and cherishing style common also to the French feminists. This style flows and meanders and includes poetry, personal experience, synchronistic happenings, dreams, travels, clinical examples, and the story behind the story of the theory they are attempting to create. Thus it may seem to produce a willfully unconventional book on psychology, unconventional, that is, to the traditional masculine form of scholarly writing. *Cherishment* mirrors the subject as the two writers hold and indulge each other while producing their *amae* book—their cherished baby.

This style is vitally important, as it exemplifies the return of the Old Woman. Her presence allows the old prepatriarchal ways of doing things to enrich and enliven—revitalize—scholarly discourse. Thus the book itself becomes, as I hope this one will be, a deeply feminine example of cherishment and of psychology.

What *Cherishment* lacks, however, is the Old Woman's fire and her ability to be open to the fierce and dark sides of herself and others. It lacks her deep understanding that the world is not all kindness and light but can be as brutal and full of suffering as it is of joy. The shadow sits comfortably in the Old Woman's presence but not in the book, which seems anima-like in its celebration of the sweetness of relationship. No panther here! I wonder, as Siegelman does, about the cherishing of the complete person, thus cherishing irritation, discordant rhythms in analysis, aggression, and the inevitable failures in empathy—all things that, if cherished and contained, can lead to even deeper growth. The authors come closest to some discussion of this in their chapter on adolescence, but, even there, the absence of the Old Woman and her age-old experience, her tensile gutsiness of hanging in there, her comfort with the shadow, and her relationship with unrelatedness, are all missing.

Margaret Wilkinson, in three pivotal papers, finds new insights that link a cherishing sort of attunement in therapy with solid neuroscience.<sup>33</sup>

The abstract of her most developed article to date, “The Mind-Brain Relationship,” explains what she is about and why I am including her here:

This paper explores the mind-body relationship, using insights from contemporary neuroscience. It seeks to investigate how our brains become who we are, how subjective experience arises . . . Current neuropsychological and neurobiological understanding of early brain development, memory, emotion, and consciousness are explored. There is also an attempt at mapping the mind-brain-self relationship from a uniquely Jungian perspective. Clinical material is included in order to show the relevance of these insights to our work in the consulting room, arguing the value of affect-regulating, relational aspects of the analytic dyad that forge new neural pathways through emotional connection. Such experience forms the emotional scaffolding necessary for the emergence of reflective function.<sup>34</sup>

Wilkinson’s work stresses the need to shift from interpretive, primarily cognitive, left-brain engagement to include a vital, more centered, affect-focused, interactive experience first. This also includes much of what we learned from early-attachment theory and analysis. Wilkinson demonstrates how this right-brained engagement helps create a secure attachment relationship that directly taps into and helps regulate and heal overactive fear circuits.<sup>35</sup> These circuits have flooded the patient’s amygdala and, unmediated (or just talked about), give rise to hyperexcitability, morbid anxiety, acute arousal, or the shutdown of hypoarousal: the fright, fight, and flight of a flooded sympathetic nervous system.

An example from my own practice may make this clearer. I often sit in silence with a patient, no matter for how brief a time, actively attuning myself both to my own bodily and emotional state and to theirs. I have noticed that my doing so often slows and deepens my patient’s breathing. Valuing the silences, the on-again-off-again gaze between us and my holding of an introspective containing space, seems to accompany my patient’s whole being in a right-brained, emotionally



connected, reflective way. Ruth, as I will call her, is a highly intelligent, quick-minded, but anxious patient. At first, she could not understand the change she was starting to feel as she was taught that change was brought about by more left-brained interpretations. My attentive, musing silence, however, has started to help her relax, as has my attention to her body. She reported comforting herself between sessions by imaging our mutual heartbeats, with her lying so close she felt and heard mine. This is where, as Wilkinson explains, the patient is learning a rhythmic structure that can modify her too anxiously wired self and actually form new neural pathways. This is where therapy truly brings about basic change so that a patient can experience, absorb, and start to regain the Old Woman's containing wisdom in her own developing self. Noted Buddhist scholar Robert Thurman explains this in a more personal way that echoes Lama Surya Das's approach: "I do not try to calculate some sort of effect upon you with my words. Rather, I speak to you from the heart. But my heart is not dumb—it senses your heart. I am moved to speak out about the surges of the heart that can bring relief, movements of the mind that have immediate and noticeable effects, movements of the spirit that call forth feelings of freedom, peace, grace, and love."<sup>36</sup>

Clarissa Pinkola Estés knows the Old Woman and celebrates her. Estés has many names for her, Wild Woman being her favorite. Among her descriptions of the wild woman is a woman with a "wise and knowing nature . . . She is both friend and mother to all those who have lost their way, all those who need a learning, all those who have a riddle to solve, all those out in the forest or the desert wandering and searching."<sup>37</sup> Part of Estés's gift as an analyst is her heartfelt attention to feelings and her treasuring of the Old Woman, what she calls the Wild Woman archetype. In *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, and in many later tales, Estés uses her skill as a Cantadora—a teller of stories—to recapture the vigor, strength, and instinctuality that rightfully belong to the feminine. She champions the heroines of her stories as they face their own shadows and combat the vagaries of their oppressive worlds with instinctually fierce grittiness. Estés writes of "making psychic-archeological digs into the ruins of the female underworld [during analysis] . . . to recover the ways of the natural

instinctive psyche.”<sup>38</sup> Her stories heal by tapping the same healing waters that Woodman, Lowinsky, Sullivan, Siegelman, and the French feminists find in creative work. Her stories heal by revaluing and mirroring women’s experience, which has been devalued and unsaid for so long in our culture. Envisioning, sound, intuition, nature, nurturing, and the appreciation of beauty and the written and spoken word of story—all are elements of attunement through which Estés sees women regaining their “strong and natural powers . . . [and] women’s beautiful and natural psychic form.”<sup>39</sup> The voice of Estés’s Cantadora is the voice of love; it is true cherishment uttered with the fierceness of the mother panther loving and protecting the wildness of her cubs. It is the fierceness with which Vajrayogini and Tara defend those who cultivate and sustain a relationship with them.

In the introduction to *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, Estés tells a dream she had in which she was telling stories and found she was standing on the shoulders of an old woman who steadied her. This woman, in turn, stood on another, even older, woman’s shoulders, and so back through time. This is the essence of a cherishing Motherline. I, too, have written about this Motherline and how few women are allied to it.<sup>40</sup>

An example of a patient who is connected to the Motherline may make my meaning clearer. I will call her Joanna. No matter her vicissitudes and the sociocultural, androcentric pulls that affected her mother, herself, and probably will affect her young daughter, all of them have a deep affiliation with the feminine that underlies everything else. And each is capable of keeping the other alive as a living presence within her. This has led Joanna to have a profound gift for relationship and also for the abundance of life, whether creating beautiful environments, graceful meals, or just the right gift, or comfort, for a friend. She is always the person to call when things of the heart need to be shared. Her daughter was born as naturally as possible and nursed for quite a long time by contemporary standards. Joanna is as attuned to her child as she was to her mother and can meet their needs in just the right, though often unconventional, way. Thus Joanna’s mother, Joanna, and her daughter all seem grounded and rooted in a depth that belongs to the Motherline. They trust themselves, when

they give themselves time to listen, and have a deep sense of knowing that often goes against conventional book knowledge.

The Motherline seems to be accompanied by profound spiritual yearning that naturally deepens and expands itself—or maybe roots itself—in some form of allegiance to a feminine source. Joanna is connected to a spiritual Motherline through devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, through Joanna's mother's mother, and back into their Italian past. This was the focus of this particular Motherline's worship, as was the saying of the rosary. Though she is not a Catholic, Joanna said the rosary with her mother in the hospital, and her daughter now includes a deeply felt Hail Mary as part of her evening prayers.

I learned a lot from Joanna, especially at the time her mother was dying. My therapeutic efforts with her have been to accompany her in the Motherline and to stand up for it and for her way of doing things when Joanna's negative animus and the world's way of seeing and judging get in the way. But I always trust her instincts and her relatedness, no matter her difficulties in adapting her ways of knowing with those of the culture in which she finds herself. Joanna knew her mother was dying long before anyone else had even started to face the fact that she was ill. I accompanied her in respecting and validating the depth and truth of her knowledge and her grief. How could this mother-daughter relationship be broken so harshly by death? How could the safety and intimacy, the give and take, between them end? It was unbearable. And so Joanna kept her mother company as she died: bringing her into her house; cooking healthful and delicious meals for as long as her mother could eat; and then bringing soups to the hospital to feed her by hand. As death drew nearer, Joanna moved into the hospital with her mother and then into her bed.

Joanna tended her mother's bodily needs as tenderly as she cared for her daughter and as she had once been cared for. She bathed her mother, tried to gently rub or caress her mother's dying body back to life. She breathed with her mother as they lay together, trying to breathe her back to health but also to remember her with the intake and exhalation of their common breath. The care and cherishment between them drew them ever closer together just as her mother was

moving into a space that, with Joanna's presence, was calm but transitioning into death. She celebrated her mother and soothed her so that when her mother died in her arms, even the death was a powerful bond of love between them. So her mother-daughter relationship started with their bodies together when she was rocked within her mother's uterus and ended with their bodies together, Joanna rocking her mother gently in her arms. Her mother looked both peaceful and beautiful before and after her death. Joanna reported that a sweet odor, as if a perfume, came from her mother's body in the hours after death. Joanna felt—and still feels—enormous grief and has mourned in a way that few seem to understand except her own little daughter, who has named it “Mommy's missing Nana. Mommy needs to cry.” The daughter knew in a deep part of herself that all this was all right, that this sorrow, loss, and dying were part of being alive. So life and death, birth and decay, pregnancy, infancy, childhood, adulthood, and old age are all part of an intimate cycle of life that the Motherline deeply recognizes and understands. It is the realm where the Old Woman is, perhaps, most completely at home.

Mother loss, to those embedded in the Motherline, is a tremendous wound but a clean one. It has brought Joanna and her daughter even closer in a wordless understanding and cherishment of each other. It has deepened Joanna's faith in her own way of knowing and has led to a grounded wisdom that can flow outward in mother love to her child, those around her, and into her creative work. Jodi, in contrast, has no ground. She is about the same age as Joanna but would look in jaundiced disgust at a Motherline. Instead, she learned to ally herself with her father who, alas for her and her mother, was filled with distrust of, even hatred for, the feminine, whether inside himself or in others. He was able to love Jodi as a young child and cherished her innocence, humor, and lightness of being. Probably to keep this partial love, she soon learned to turn against her mother and against her feminine self. She learned what so many young girls in our culture learn, which is, as Carol Gilligan has written, not to know what she knew.<sup>41</sup> Jodi seems to have constructed a false self based on what Jung, in his listing of negative mother complexes, describes as “anything, so long as it is not like mother.”<sup>42</sup> This is the touchstone by which Jodi

has organized her life. It is male identified, driven, and perfectionistic (and has led to much success in a culture and profession that expects almost constant work).

But her rejection of her mother and the feminine go even deeper: in a tragic form of cognitive dissonance that prevented her from holding two conflicting ideas inside herself (the reality of her mother as she was, and what the, now separated, father said her mother was), Jodi erased the reality of her mother, adopted the father's view of her and of women in general, and made the mother even more despicable than the father envisioned her. So the two joined in a pseudo-Fatherline that kept her father's allegiance for an all-too-short a time. Jodi reported that they united by keeping up a running story of the terrible things the mother had said or thought or been or done.

Jodi confessed, a few years into therapy, that she had learned to exaggerate, if not make up, things about her mother to whet her father's interest in Jodi, to maintain her alliance with him, and to earn his interest and sympathy. She discerned that he most despised her mother's body and its sexuality, and so the two started to have an inquisitorlike fascination with the apostate's sexuality, which led to Jodi's making florid stories out of her mother's occasional friendships. And she came to believe the terrible monster mother the two had created. I imagine that the too-passive and rather ineffectual mother's own unconscious rage at her husband's view of her, and her daughter's acting out, certainly added a fiery shadow piece of its own.

When Jodi finally made her way into my office, she had taken on an armored outer shell that barely held the shards of her fragmented self together. Physically, she had an autoimmune disease and anorexia. She warded off her anxiety, rage, and fear with a judging negative animus that scalded anything not logical and "to the book." She internalized the father's abhorrence of the mother's body and the mother's sexuality into distrust and hatred of her own body, with tragic results. It was as if her swerve away from her mother had turned Jodi against her own body itself. So Jodi's body no longer distinguished between friendly cells and harmful ones and, in a fibromyalgialike disease, attacked everything inside of her feminine body as a harmful enemy to be destroyed. It was an appalling body metaphor for the way Jodi

had attacked her mother and now attacked all that reminded her of the mother. Jodi's female body looked at the feminine in itself as diseased and so attacked it and created real disease, and Jodi became its victim.

Her anorexic relation to eating was not, it seemed to me, about the reality of food but about a contest of wills: a battle between what another anorexic woman has called the idea of food and her power to control that idea. Disembodied ideas and power replaced healthful, nourishing matter and digestion. By radically restricting what she ate, Jodi reduced her body to a boyish shape, did not menstruate, and distrusted, at best, what I would call the feminine realm of earth, body, comfort, and nurture, keeping them all under the rigid dominion of her will.

In my initial countertransference, I, too, found myself caught up in an almost lurid and excessive interest in Jodi's monster-mother stories. I noticed and questioned my own body state; it was as if I had overdosed on sugar and my feelings were on a roller-coaster ride. I wondered if Jodi was trying to gain my interest and affection in the same way she had her father's. It was not the body heaviness, kicked-in-the-gut feeling, or other intense body states I experience on hearing others' sad or traumatic tales. The closest I could come to naming it was something slightly sexual and very sensationalistic, as if I had been reading the *National Inquirer*. And, after the initial weird high, it left me feeling painfully hollowed out and empty. I do not question the truth of what a patient tells me, as it is the matter, the *materia*, they bring for us to work on, and it is part of the cause of their suffering. But my reading of Elizabeth Loftus's and others' work on the unreliability of memory,<sup>43</sup> and my own body response, led me to cool my interest in Jodi's dreadful mother, and gradually the stories toned themselves down and took a very minor place in her analysis.

My work with Jodi is very much a work in process. Part of it comes from deep meditation on my part—not the airy spirituality Jodi uses as a defense so she can soar away from her poor, problematical, female body and lose touch with herself, but a grounded, here-and-now-focused one. It helps me to have both Tara—especially the animal Blue

She-wolf Tara and the Green Earth Mother Tara—in the room with me and Vajrayogini’s precious yoni and feminine fire. I often silently call on Tara and Vajrayogini to surround Jodi with their loving feminine presence. I also work internally on all the ways my own feminine nature was wounded and am conscious of mothering myself as I mother her. It helps me to recall my own infantile states and allow room for, even cherish, all its disparate parts.

I withstand her rage and attacks by *wu wei*—a nonconfrontive, nondefensive largeness of being that I usually can tap into. Above all, I do not take sides with one part of her against another, or with my love of the feminine against her hate. There is room for both and what is beyond them both. I pay a hovering attention to her body and its fragmentation, and to ways in which I, too, could split off. I sometimes feel as if I were in a hospital on the battlefield caring for our culture’s latest casualty. So I care for Jodi as I would care for a war victim and survivor. I am honest with her, but only when I can stay in loving alliance with her. When she allows herself to relax a bit into the session and feels any comfort in and from my silent cherishment, her attack at the next session seeks to undo it violently. It is as if my tending her fragments Jodi for a while, almost as if she remembers the relaxation and comfort only as the pain of someone dressing her burned or napalmed skin. She consciously cannot hold or recollect that the wounds were dressed and soothed and continue to heal.

I talk of food if she wants to, but as simply and concretely as I can. I cherish her profoundly as a child of our culture and for her fierce will.

Jodi has found her way into a good Alcoholics Anonymous–type program for eating disorders and so gets practical support as well. Her latest sign of progress is changing from a medical doctor whom she felt to be dogmatic and authoritarian to a friendlier one. This new doctor has a special interest in women’s health and hormones, and in the use of Chinese medicine and herbs as well. So the progress now is a softening that, by the way, helps ease the monitoring I need to do of my own shadow states and injuries. (I find that being conscious of them is a blessing, as it keeps me honest and prevents me from pathologizing her.)

I cherish the softness that is starting to appear in her features, the blood when she again started having periods, and the few times she can tell me about a woman who is not a monster. And, oddly, I really do not mind her “monsterizing” me. I see it as part of what our culture has done with Lilith, Kali, and the Old Woman. I am complimented to be included with them. I think my nonverbal valuing of them and their power allows Jodi something her mother could not give her: a strong female energy that nonviolently maintains its many-faceted center, no matter how it is attacked or reviled. I know that center’s beauty and its sacredness, whether in Jodi, the Old Woman, or me, and so I can cherish what is most wounded in Jodi’s being.

What I have not mentioned is that the essence behind my work as an analyst rises out of a rediscovery of a Motherline of my own in my Jungian studies and in a spiritual practice. It does not matter what practice therapists have as long as they engage in some kind of spiritual or mental training that helps them watch their mind stream as thoughts, projections, and emotions rise and fall, come and go. One’s own capacity to fall into complexes or to project both positive and negative parts of oneself demand vigilant awareness for any analytic work to be done on others’ projection making.

I cherish my own form of Tibetan Buddhism and find it especially valuable for my work with patients. Its basic concepts of love and compassion, its action through nonaction, and the vastness of its meditative field help me to be more fully with my patients and in the world. I find its philosophy congruent with Jung’s ideas and a Jungian way of doing analysis. By this I mean both are at home with dream work, healing visualizations, art, sand play, and metaphors. Buddhism, similar to Jung’s idea of the Self and its power of self-healing, also teaches that we have within us everything we need to heal. We have a core Self (or Buddha Nature), yet obscure it and our natural capacity to be whole with the smoke of all the projections and fantasies we create and the mind games we play on ourselves and others. We spin away from who we are in our frantic games of avoidance.

Rather than be heady, let me conclude this chapter by recalling some ideas I think apply to a cherishing kind of therapy and a cher-



ishing way of being in the world. First, the cultivation of focused yet contemplative attention allows one to concentrate on what is happening within the patient, in oneself in relation to the patient, and in the room, rather than being attached to theory, interpretation, outcome, or desire. It is a feeling of attunement with what is going on in the present moment and between one's patient and oneself. (This is like the mother cat, centered, relaxed, and peacefully alert.)

Second, the therapist has the ability to see and to cherish both the Self the patient is and the wounded part-self that traps the patient in so much pain. I take this pain seriously as one sort of reality, yet can, at the same time, see the patient's "original face": his or her true Self free and clear of that pain. Thus, the whole potential of the patient is present, instead of just the part-self or complex with which the patient identifies. Unstated, this ability to hold both views seems to ground us and helps patients escape their complete identification with their wounds. It gives them some room in which to develop a sense of well-being and of the possible richness of life.

Third, the valuing of a right-brained, emotionally connected, reflective way of holding and attunement in therapy and in the world includes a mostly silent attention to the body and to the feeling in the room and an ability to mirror and sometimes express, possibly in metaphor, what my right brain is imaging. It is, as a patient put it, two connected hearts attuning themselves. One heart and body subliminally learns from the more relaxed and possibly more expansive one. She or he slowly starts to learn to flow with what is happening rather than defending against it with the old patterns of splitting, denial, tension, anger, or fear.

Fourth, therapy includes the belief that learning to live one's life more naturally and congruently benefits others, since we are all linked in the collective unconscious. Learning to disidentify from one's complexes, and thereby to relieve one's own suffering, has a powerful effect on others and seems to help them as well. This interconnectivity between all beings requires a more active valuation of everything we do.<sup>44</sup> Thus, what is happening in the room has an effect outside the room. Like an infinitesimal drop of water, its ripples spread out in ways that may be of use to others.

Fifth, the therapist gains from believing that there are healing energies in the world, or powers, or streams of potent wisdom and compassion present everywhere that can be allied with and even called, respectfully, into the room to reconnect the person with the great bounty of the universe. There is also a belief that we need actively to ally ourselves with what helps ourselves and others and our battered planet. This is why I call Tara and Vajrayogini into the room with me as healing energetic presences who want to be of use.

I seemed to have some knowledge of these healing energies even as a very young child. I experienced them then through the fierce and good mothering I received during my early childhood years from a beloved Scottish nanny whose room I shared and whom I adored. Though my physical connection to her was broken by World War II, I kept my link to her and to the physical presence of feminine energy alive in me. I did this by transferring my alliance with her to include the Virgin Mary in the convent school I attended after I was brought to the United States. My attachment was so literal and so strong that I left notes to the Mother under a particular statue of her that seemed to resemble my nurse, notes like, “Holy Mother, please let Margot be less mean,” or “Please let me do well on this exam,” or “Holy Mother, help me, my poison ivy itches like crazy!” Magical thinking maybe, but it maintained my connection to a healing and comforting source and fostered my resilience during a difficult time. If I was really connecting with the Holy Mother, no matter her name or form, rather than just whining or wheedling, my prayers tended to get a powerful, though sometimes surprising, response. So I learned firsthand and early what it felt like to be in or out of a complex or a state of grace.

My meditation, faulty and hesitating as my practice may be, brings the living presence of this healing energy into the room with patients, or at least makes me aware of its presence. Allying with it in a humble sort of nonvolitional space, again, nonverbally, seems to make a difference in the room.

Sixth, the therapist has an equal belief in obscuration, which, in this world of suffering, labors to shadow, poison, obscure, fragment, and dissolve true relationship and loving kindness. This is how I un-

derstand complexed states, faulty attachment, entropy, and Freud's or, rather, Sabina Spielrein's, death instinct.<sup>45</sup> This is the harsh, dumb aspect of an instinct to unravel and destroy and to flee the Self and its healing potential in favor of a host of negative states. It perpetuates our lineages of wounded people unmothered by the Old Woman and her wisdom. Some of my hardest work with Jodi has been to help shift her identification with harsh nihilism and help her make room for less-destructive thoughts. Some of my hardest work with myself is to see this obscuration at work in me and all the complexes into which it throws me and all the stupid, heartless mistakes I can fall into if I am not aware. This involves, in Jung's words, our ethical duty to take our own internal and external lives seriously.

Seventh, the therapist is mindful of the presence of the Old Woman and her great earth-centered power as our ancient heritage. If we are mindful of her, she and her great earth-centered power have much to teach and give us. Whether this world is an illusion or possibly something each of us creates in our own image, I cherish and love it as a creation of Shakti, the feminine energy of the universe. I love its beauty and, untampered with, its ability to self-regulate, even if this means volcanos, earthquakes, forest fires, hurricanes, and other manifestations of its cataclysmic power. I also feel the great sadness and fierce anger the Old Woman feels, that so many of us today feel, as I witness our increasing violence toward each other, toward ourselves, toward our planet, and the continuing hatred and misuse of the feminine. I also feel sad that so many of us have to live in fear, sad that so many of us have fathers who repress their feminine side and have frightened girls as mothers rather than adult, fully formed men and woman who could ground us in a sense of ourselves and our power and possibly help us be of use in stemming the destruction and misuse of ourselves and our precious world.

Eighth, I have a personal understanding of what Buddhists call a *bardo*—an in-between place. It is a state or place where transference and projection can be experienced firsthand. I believe one's past identification with things helps create (or is the lens through which one sees) what one now sees and experiences. An example of this in Western eyes comes from the movie *Ghost*, the one with Whoopi Goldberg,

Demi Moore, and Patrick Swayze, in which one person who is dying sees and experiences ghouls, demons, and attacking mobs while another sees light and experiences joy and love. This is way too simple but is a metaphor for our ethical duty to examine how we live our lives and for us to take each moment both lovingly and seriously.

I link this idea of experiencing the world as a mirror image of one's own psyche with my understanding of the hell realm. I believe it may not be someplace one goes to after death but can be, instead, a living reality. Some patients, like Jodi, come into my consulting room inhabiting hell realms that they then perpetuate both inside themselves and in their outer lives. In Tibetan paintings of the Wheel of Existence, the hell realm, as well as each state of existence, has a peaceful being or two there as well; they represent healing energies at work helping constellate some amelioration of the suffering wherever it may be found. On a global level, some people, like Mother Teresa, dedicate their lives to helping those in pain. In my much smaller personal world, I can serve my patients by working intensely on my own deficiencies as well as helping them learn to digest, change, and eventually metamorphose their lives into richer and more related ones. I am far from being that peaceful being depicted in the painting, but I can at least call that aspect of the Old Woman's energy into the room or, as I did as a child, leave a note for her to read.

In this chapter, I have presented a historical, personal, and clinical overview of the ways in which the presence of the Old Woman—the archetypal fierce, transformative, and loving feminine—shapes and changes both therapy and one's relation to the world. I started with the image of a panther mothering her young. When one hears the word *cherishment*, one should think of the panther rather than the sentimental, all-good mother who, all too often is an unmothered person's doomed way of trying to be of use. We may need to growl when we say the words *panther* or *Old Woman*, or even howl at first, like the Newari woman in the second chapter. This is to remind ourselves of who we are and thus reclaim some of our intrinsic power. We have to change so much of what we have been taught to do, stop devaluing ourselves, and stop giving ourselves and our creative energy away. Instead, we need to reclaim, value, and cherish ourselves.

The panther is a fierce and protective natural mother who cherishes herself as well as her young. This is the Old Woman in one of her animal forms who offers an active experience of the fierce and protective mother archetype. The old ways of being a woman or feminine most of us were taught just do not work anymore. It is time for a new story, in which this book may play a small part, a new story that leads to self-care and respect, wisdom, cherishment, and power.



## CHAPTER 4

# *The Old Woman, Her Daughter, and Her Daughter's Children*

## Weaving Together

In the last resort every genuine encounter of two human beings must be conceived of as a *mysterium coniunctionis*. The living mystery of life is always hidden between Two, and it is the true mystery which cannot be betrayed by words and depleted by arguments.

—C. G. Jung, *Word and Image*

Thus far, I have dealt with the recovery of the many sides of the complete feminine predominantly in woman's psyches. The development of the Old Woman and her Daughter in a man's anima deserves its own investigation. In this chapter, therefore, I will focus on one man and his dreams in order to demonstrate how active the Old Woman and her Daughter can be in a man's psyche. He is a patient with whom I worked many years ago. I am in his debt both for the work we did together then and for his agreeing now to let me use his valuable material.

Bruce, as I will call him, was middle aged, married, with adult children, and nearly retired from his job. He came into analysis because he was pondering his next move, including the possibility of becoming a therapist himself. He had done what he needed to do for the first half of his life but still had a store of physical and spiritual energy at his disposal. His dreams vividly demonstrate the development of the feminine in a man. I will give you the dreams first and then comment on the deep cherishment, as well as struggles, that went into our work.

But before I begin, I need to remind you of the dream I had when I was about to start work on this book. The final part of the dream provides a good image for the weaving together of a more-developed masculine and a more-developed feminine consciousness that is the heart of this chapter.

In my dream, I drove a red convertible to help a dispirited man (Kobe Bryant) reunite with his wife, or positive inner feminine, and their children. I said that this dream indicated a meeting of a troubled masculine figure with the new/old feminine, which is the subject of this book. In the dream, the red car of feeling, driven by the crone, helped the inner animus function as a bridge—the jumping into the car—after allowing the animus to be of use to the old woman. The old woman drove her red car to help the man come into and regain what he seems to lack or to have lost. Once in the younger woman's silver car, he found expression for his own feelings rather than being cut off and at the whim of his moods. I wrote of Kobe Bryant as a good illustration of how men suffer, and may make others suffer, because of their being brought up so one-sidedly and, later, as adults, being treated again one-sidedly and with excessive deference because of their worldly success. Men, as well as women, lack experience of the Old Woman's wisdom and what she has to teach them. So many men today have had little, if any, chance or example of how to be either with mature women (even their wives) or how to cultivate a mature inner feminine, or anima.

The mother in my dream was driving her children in her silver car and aiming for a reunion with Bryant. She was not a temptress, or a black snake demon, or a wounded or blind neurotic maiden, or an

enchanting, airy sprite; no more was she a terrible mother, or a woman to be hated, scorned, used, or ignored. She was the driver of the lunar, transformative, silver car. The little girl, needing as much love and attention from him as did the boy in his lap, flung her arms around Bryant's neck. Just as with Kobe Bryant in my dream, all men and women need a chance to develop their feeling, loving, related sides as well as to live gracefully in the world.

After the dream, I mulled over the Old Woman, her Daughter, and the Daughter's children. In the preceding chapters, I have tried to set the stage for them, to bring them to life, and to demonstrate, with them vitally animated, how the practice of therapy and one's being in the world deepen and transform. Some masculine energy needed to play a role here, as Kobe Bryant did in my dream. The masculine psyche needs the healing brought by the Old Woman just as much as the feminine does. Many women today are engaged in this vital task, yet relatively few men take up a similar quest: a reunion, and alchemical interconnection, with their redeemed feminine dragons. Most men still prefer to conquer or slay what they are unable to subdue. I thought of the men in my practice over the years and how much they needed the Old Woman and a relationship to her and to her Daughters—women with access to all sides of a fully developed feminine self.

But then a dream and a synchronistic card from him reminded me of my patient Bruce, whom I had seen many years ago. I remembered his commitment and the intense and dedicated labor with which he slowly developed his inner feminine nature as he grew his authentic self in analysis. He did this primarily through the reimagining of the feminine in his dreams and through a very alive, intense, sometimes combative and passionately engaged analysis that lasted for about five years. I am not going to present a detailed case history here. As Jung wrote to the analyst Mary Briner when she was thinking of publishing her sessions with Jung, "It is absolutely impossible for you to know about the background to and motivation of the things [said]. The overtones & undertones are inevitably lacking." Jung went on to tell her that "all decisive moments in analysis . . . originate in the indescribable human totality." He added, "An encounter of two individuals, which analysis is, cannot be represented on principle, since it is



a matter of two totalities transcending the narrow confines of consciousness.”<sup>1</sup>

Rather than attempting to convey the essence of “two totalities,” I will simply track the images of the Old Woman, her Daughter, and her Daughter’s children that appeared in Bruce’s dreams and demonstrate the alchemical weaving together of his disparate parts. I will also try to represent the ways both he and I came to cherish these images and dreams, and even the sometimes painful struggles between us. Given the fact that Bruce’s analysis ended in the early 1990s, the material, like the compost heap of my dream, has had time to rest and age; the alchemical potency of the analysis, however, remains active. It continues to instruct me about the living reality of Jung’s alchemical metaphors as well as his emphasis on the vital connection between therapist and patient. Jung wrote about what this work entails and what may be encountered:

By no device can the treatment be anything but the product of mutual influence, in which the whole being of the doctor as well as the patient plays its part. In the treatment there is an encounter between two irrational factors, that is to say, between two persons who are not fixed and determinable quantities but who bring with them, besides their more or less clearly defined fields of consciousness, an indefinitely extended sphere of non-consciousness. Hence the personalities of doctor and patient are often infinitely more important for the outcome of the treatment than what the doctor says and thinks . . . For two personalities to meet is like mixing two different chemical substances: if there is any combination at all, both are transformed.<sup>2</sup>

Bruce was an intense, compact man of Greek heritage with a Taurus-like energy and natural physicality that he disguised behind an almost priestly attitude. He was a self-made man who came to see me when he was near retirement. Like many perceptive and sensitive people in their middle years, he had successfully negotiated job, marriage, and children, yet he felt that he was missing something. His dreams propelled him to go over his life and look at all he had neglected or



Page from the *Rosarium Philosophorum* (Frankfurt, 1550).

In Jaffe, *Bild und Wort*, 126.

let pass. His relation to the feminine was damaged, as he had been brought up in a faith and a culture that considered women inferior, unreliable, and divided into Holy Virgins to be worshiped from afar, and the majority untrustworthy, falsehearted, and seductive. Yet a profound sadness underlay his cavalier energy, and he yearned for connection and depth. He felt he lacked mothering, as his own mother, seemingly constantly pregnant, had had little time for him. Bruce felt she was also sometimes inappropriate with her boy children in what he took to be a coarse and belittling manner. He tended to idealize

unobtainable women and to reject and demean the women around him. He had started to read Jung and was very taken by his and Joseph Campbell's work on archetypes, especially the Mother archetype. Its manifestations in nature infused him with profound longing and also, again, with distrust. He had a very good heart but suspected it and his "unmanly" feelings. He did some of his best introspective work on the long runs he took for exercise.

Let me start the story of his reclamation and reimagining of the feminine with a poem:

THE RUNNER

*by Allen Grossman*

*The man was thinking about his mother  
And about the moon.  
It was a mild night.  
He was running under the stars. The moon  
Had not risen,  
but he did not doubt it would  
Rise as he ran.  
Small things crossed the road  
Or turned uneasily on it. His mother  
Was far away, like a cloud on a mountain  
With rainy breasts. The man was not a runner  
But he ran with strength.  
After a while, the moon  
Did rise among the undiminished stars,  
And he read as he ran the stone night-scripture  
Of the moon by its own light.  
Then his mother  
Came and ran beside him, smelling of rain;  
And they ran all night, together,  
Like a man and his shadow.<sup>3</sup>*

The poem captures an essential part of Bruce that responded to the elemental feminine in both a physical and a spiritual way. He longed

for companionship with this sort of cloud, shadow, nature mother, as well as longing for a feminine other to relieve his loneliness.

I will follow the changes in Bruce's relationship with the Mother archetype and with the feminine by following a few of the dreams through which his psyche instructed him. Most are exactly as he dreamed them, but I have shortened some longer ones. Bruce was a big dreamer and demonstrated what Jung called "an ethical responsibility" toward them. By that I mean that he scrupulously recorded them, made notes about them, and also, after bringing them to analysis, often did Active Imagination with some aspects of them, and then attempted to incorporate what they taught him into his daily life. I have more than a thousand pages of his effort over the five years of our work together. His dedication and hard work got us over some very rough places.

Bruce's first dream after making an appointment but before seeing me was in three parts. First, "I [Bruce] am standing in a yogic balance pose. A short, uncoordinated young girl tries to do this also. Everyone in the room is laughing at her. I get angry and order them to respect her." Second, "I am a baby, and an unknown woman is holding me and gently rocking me when my childhood friend breaks in and says, 'No! You have to take turns.'" Third, "I go to a friend's house and see kittens and cats running and tumbling and having a great time. I get uneasy and angry and say they have to behave or else!"

So, here his psyche, as indicated in his first dream, gave me images of the work we needed to do together. First, Bruce needed help in bringing out his now-unconscious respect for the feminine as evidenced in the initial form of the gawky girl. In order to help it become conscious, we needed to investigate the split between his psyche's asking for respect for the feminine and his consciously mocking and disparaging it in its present form. Second, he needed the experience of a cherishing analyst who would tend his young self by holding him and gently caring for him. This would help repair his early infantile deprivation. Third, Bruce needed my help to change his distrust of the feminine (the cats' animal nature), especially feminine physicality, exuberance, and play.

A month later Bruce did an Active Imagination: "X was receptive

to my desire. She lay down nude spreading her legs to receive me. Her head appeared to me like the sun and her huge breasts like twin mountains. Her legs—she had the soles of her feet on the earth with her knees bent—seemed like two large trees as a gateway into the deep dark forest. As I entered, I felt like I was going into the depths of the Earth. I felt an immense desire to plunge in, yet this desire was accompanied by a fearful reservation.”

This shows Bruce in relationship to the animal, now Earth Goddess, aspect of the archetypal feminine. He wanted to stress the sexuality of the feeling and its power. He resented and fought my attempt to explore his “fearful reservation” and its possible link with his anger at the cats of his first dream.

Bruce’s psyche, however, also wanted to deal with the “fearful reservation,” as he soon dreamed the following:

I follow a woman out of a store onto a busy street. Her skirt was caught way up behind. I’m interested. She smooths the skirt out and walks on, then hurries down some subway stairs. When I got to the top I asked the subway attendant if “these stairs went down?” She said yes. I went down into the bottom of a dead end. A loathsome, disfigured, decrepit man in a dirty black robe walked creepingly toward me with his arms outstretched. I thought he was a bum and started to turn away. But he grinned as if he were waiting for me and put his arms around me. His burning eyes looked deeply into mine. I sprung free and raced up the stairs. It felt like a chilling confrontation with death.

This dream initiated a long and major part of Bruce’s work on reclaiming and owning his shadow’s creepily misshapen relationship to sexuality. This was not only his personal shadow but also a collective one that we, in this culture share in the dead-end passages and back alleys of our internal night-towns.<sup>4</sup> My respect for Bruce and my holding him analytically as he struggled with the disfigured, deformed, and decrepit parts of his own sexuality and sexual fantasies helped him negotiate some very rough passages, as did his courageous acceptance of the “death of the ego” experience he had to undergo

in order to confront and claim this shadow. We struggled, as he was continually tempted to split off from, and disclaim, the shadow or else project it onto me.

One of the hardest things in analysis is to look at these creatures within us and see the immense damage they can wreak, yet, at the same time, not turn away from them or suppress or bury them. Integration of the shadow is such an easy thing to say, almost a Jungian cliché, yet so very difficult in practice. I needed all my skill to help Bruce confront his shadow without making him feel shamed, inferior, or judged. One of the most valuable ways I did this, unknown to him, was sharing some of his shadow work by revisiting my own night-towns and the shadow side of my own sexuality in both my training analysis and in my supervision. I felt I had a clear responsibility to do my own share of this confusing work; however, it made me really aware of the truth of Jung's statement that "it is sometimes exceedingly painful to live up to everything one expects of one's patient."<sup>5</sup>

It was a difficult period of shadow work, as Bruce was often caught either in guilt for his past behavior and current thoughts, or in a negative transference in which he blamed me for all his or his anima's failings. Jung's alchemical model helped us both find our way:

Alchemy describes, not merely in general outline but often in the most astonishing detail, the same psychological phenomenology which can be observed in the analysis of unconscious processes. The individual's specious unity that emphatically says "I want, I think" breaks down under the impact of the unconscious. So long as a patient can think that somebody else . . . is responsible for his difficulties, he can save some semblance of unity . . . But once he realizes that he himself has a shadow, that his enemy is his own heart, then the conflict begins.<sup>6</sup>

Every time Bruce left his own struggle with the shadow and projected it onto me so that I became the person who was responsible for his difficulties, his psyche came to our rescue with dreams. For instance, a young bikini-clad woman and Bruce search under a stadium for a golf ball and a wet photo of a famous (and womanizing) singer. He keeps

warning her to be careful or they will literally step into crap. They find the golf ball and the photo but then begin to sink into the muck. Or Bruce dreams that he is on a construction job. He walks over the lawn and realizes the cesspool has overflowed. He tries to keep his shoes clean by jumping on its cover, but it tilts and almost tips him in. Bruce realizes he has the responsibility of fixing the cesspool. An irritating, blatty-mouthed old woman (whom he associated with me) keeps reminding him of this. Bruce had simply planned to raise the level of the lawn.

Both dreams again required him to take back his projections and to deal with all the crap and the mucky aspects of his male-female relationships as well as with material he needed to process and digest rather than just cover over. "Raising the level of the lawn" at first seems to many people so much easier and simpler than examining what one wants to suppress. Here, Bruce's alliance with the bikini-clad woman and her involvement with his womanizing shadow are shown to be associated with shit and cesspools. These are collective as well as personal problems. We spent many painful months exploring bad habits, vices, how our culture teaches us to make a game out of sexuality instead of seeing it as a way to connect. We also examined our own and our culture's objectification of the feminine and our fascination with pornography and the seamy side of life. I tried to help Bruce with this again through my own analysis, but also by struggling neither to be a "blatty-mouthed" nag nor to get drawn into his fantasies.

At this time, a new aspect of the feminine started to appear in his dreams. She was a forthright and loving little girl whom Bruce described as a tomboy. She was quite irrepressible and started to frequent his dreams. He found out her name was Joy. At first, she was about five or six and told him she was his daughter but had to live far away because his wife (his own conventionally feminine part) neither understood nor liked Joy. Bruce, in the dreams, felt very happy to have found her and wanted her to live with them. She could not quite yet, as Bruce still needed to do more outer work on his inherited attitudes toward the feminine. Joy helped him in his inner work and became more and more important to him as she continued to appear in his dreams.

About six months into the analysis, one of Bruce's most important dreams occurred; it was archetypal in its intensity. It was as if the psyche were not content with digging up personal cesspools but wanted to go even deeper, possibly into the collective, so that his new feminine child could be securely held in a safe home with firm foundations. He described the dream this way:

A guide, a younger woman, and Bruce were in a huge mansion. The guide [whom he associated with his analyst and with whom I now associate the Old Woman] carried a light. We turned left down a long corridor and the guide said, "Okay, tonight we are going into the pits, the bowels of the universe." She led the way down through a trapdoor in the bottom floor to a set of stairs. When we reached the bottom, we stood in a vast place that seemed without walls. The floor was not solid. There was a mist, and all sorts of prehistoric antediluvian creatures crept or lumbered their way slowly through the mud and ooze.

Bruce was frightened, thinking that his guide (his analyst) was insisting that he go with her back to the beginning of time. Bruce described his stomach knotting up and that he felt great fear and awe, as well as distrust of his analyst/guide. Because of his fear, Bruce continued the dream later, alone, in an Active Imagination, where he then saw a ray of light, and his spiritual guide (a man) led him away and up through the water to a sort of Garden of Eden lagoon, where I, no longer in the role of analyst or guide, frolicked about and swam in the water. Then we danced, and the three of us walked toward the sun.

I, frankly, had a very hard time with this, as I valued his descent far more than his, to me, too-idealistic escape. I bridled at the change of my role as guide and analyst into a romantic anima figure; however, I respected Bruce's feeling that he had journeyed bravely and ventured into the bowels of the universe, and I kept quiet about what he consciously concluded was the aim of his journey: the reclamation of his anima—his hidden inner Aphrodite—the swimming woman. He noted, "I, through my anima, can either serve as the creator of life or serve as the waste disposal (the cesspool). Both creator and waste



disposal are in fact very close to being in the same place in my psyche. Hence it is like being on the razor's edge."

I did not crush what Bruce was struggling with at this level, but it was an effort to keep my peace, and I rued his valuing his Eden more than the depths. His imagining me frolicking and dancing like the bikini-clad woman also felt like an attack on my role as analyst. I resented being made into a sort of erotic anima figure, perhaps like the Salome in Jung's early visions. This was yet more work that I had to undergo to keep my own house in order. I needed neither to reject Bruce's Active Imagination nor to become too stiff—even puritanical—or too diminished. Part of me told me to lighten up and experience the joy of frolicking, swimming, and dancing. But when I tried it in my own Active Imagination, it felt all wrong. Neither my inner Old Woman nor her Daughter felt comfortable with the scene. I realized, finally, that it felt as if I would be breaking an incest taboo by imagining a scene with my patient. I wondered if that might not have been part of what Bruce was after in order to defeat his analysis.

Getting back to Bruce's psyche, it seemed to me that he had had a invaluable opportunity to witness the primordial roots of his and all our essences, and that he had turned aside from it. However, I trusted his unconscious to go at the pace he needed, and I kept my silence.

I feel that the psyche may have agreed with my assessment, because more shit and cesspool dreams followed as he explored both Aphrodite and the women in his life (including me) and his mostly very negative, distrustful attitude toward them. A month into this process, Bruce dreamed, "Now the cesspool is really clogged. I decide the only thing to do is dig the whole thing up and start again." He then had a dream that both shocked him and shook him up in a way that any number of interpretations from me could never have done. Bruce dreamed of a sexual scene from which he tried unsuccessfully to shield his new little girl, Joy (the one who was not quite ready to live with him). He knew it was an inappropriate, even traumatic, scene for her to watch. In it an attractive, adult, "sexy" woman both lures and teases him. He tries to seduce her as a sort of Eros figure and, when that does not work, he rides in like a "blind bull" and seizes her with the intention of bending her to his will. He noted, "Why am I beating

the hell out of my feminine part? And what does it mean for the little girl to witness this?"

This is shadow work at its hardest, where one is confronted by what one so often buries, projects, or disclaims. And so we engaged in ever-deeper consideration of a certain aspect of both men's and women's sexuality and the negative games each play with and on the other. We explored the role-playing in which Bruce had been engaged; we also explored how much more difficult it was for him to be open to, and accepting of, the dance of sexuality. Bruce was most upset that his inner little girl had witnessed the scene. This gave us a chance to explore his early childhood and to investigate the ramifications of our oversexualized culture on its children, here, in Bruce's new feminine energy, the little girl, Joy. (I, in my analysis and supervision, did equally heavy work investigating where I, like Bruce's Joy, brought an unprocessed, too young, and too early sexualized part of myself into our work.)

About a year into the analysis, Bruce started to feel less hostile and suspicious of me and more needy and dependent, hating the seemingly endless time between sessions. My countertransference turned from sometimes being hostile and on guard to a very positive, caring, and maternal one. I had kept quiet about my suspicion of his Garden of Eden fantasy and let his dreams lead and instruct him. At the end of the year, however, as he kept returning to it, I suggested he do an Active Imagination to explore why he found himself in that particular earthly paradise. (I privately explored my huge aversion to representing, or being a carrier for, his "beautiful anima figure," especially since I knew that the anima, as well as the analyst, could serve as the one who understood and that the anima's true role bridged the way to greater consciousness.) Bruce's answer at the next session was very revealing:

It is a shelter, not an end but a means to an end, my shelter from the pull of life. It's the center between heaven and earth [Bruce thought of his analyst as the shelter]. I am here in this particular lagoon/paradise to learn the connection between heaven and earth and the unity of it all. I am here now as a result of being

born in my family, to have suffered poverty and deprivation; to feel distanced from heaven, to be stretched out beyond remembering, to feel/understand the utmost sense of estrangement. My task is to find my way through this maze, like Theseus connected to Ariadne's thread, to travel deep down into the center but with my cord connected to both you, Claire, and my spiritual mentor. My task, though, is the opposite of Theseus.' He goes to liberate the maidens; the maidens have imprisoned me. I see that my Minotaur [the half bull, half man who was chained inside a cave] is a part of me I had been unaware of; I must confront him instead of fleeing him. I was led down to the bowels, back in time, for the purpose of knowing this and that I could not do it alone but needed both you, Claire, to take me back, way back in time, and my spiritual guide to keep my connection to heaven. Now that I know I am not alone, that I have not one but two guides, I will be able to go back to that place and get a better look at those prehistoric monsters lumbering around inside of me.

I learned a lot from Bruce's explanation of his descent. I also learned to be more open to his masculine way of descent. I realized that women may have an easier time with their monsters and oozy antediluvian creatures than do men. This may be because we do not have to separate completely from the archaic mother realm or cut the bonds that link mother to daughter in the Motherline. Thus, women are often much closer to this matriarchal mother world and its decidedly nonrational, fluid, even bloody and chaotic primeval fecundity. A man, such as Bruce, may need his connection to heaven in order to safely make the descent while keeping his link to order. It is like Joseph Wheelwright used to say: "Yes, I go there, but I always keep one foot wrapped tightly about my chair" (personal communication). Or as Jung reminded himself when he faced his own teeming fantasies in 1914: "I am Dr. Jung. I live at 228 Seestrasse in Kusnacht; I have a wife and five children; I see my patients and earn my living."<sup>7</sup> These are necessary and important threads for keeping oneself grounded in reality. The Old Woman and the realm she cherishes are often far

more alien to men than to women, and men, in turn, project their fear of this realm out onto women. Freudian cultural historian Peter Gay tracks this fear psychologically: “The fear of women has taken many forms in history. It has been repressed, disguised, sublimated, or advertised, but in one way or another it seems as old as civilization itself . . . It is born of man’s early total dependence on his mother, and his longing, frustrated love for her, his defenseless lassitude after intercourse, and the frightening and portentous implications of the female genitals . . . The Medusa and all the dangers she stands for are a very old story.”<sup>8</sup>

As Bruce struggled with his inner Medusas and dragons and “very old stories,” he started to perceive another side of the situation. He wrote me a letter while he was making his descent:

All my life I have suffered from experiencing only a half of life at one time only knowing what I felt from my ego state. Oh, the suffering and hurt I needlessly inflicted on myself. Rather all the joy and ecstasy I missed out on because of my blindness, being lost from the path, disunited and fragmented. This is an emotion like I have never felt before: of ecstasy and pain together: the ecstasy of union, the pain of separation. Feeling one without the other is to be incomplete; like an outer experience of life, *maya*, an illusion. Not the reality of the inner experience of unity and wholeness: real suffering and joy. Love, the fundamental quality of my archetype *anima*, I have distorted into lust. At this moment, I love everyone: none can escape, not even my adversaries. I see that my work is to feel these emotions coming through me and to make love to them internally allowing that love to flow through me.

Many months into this difficult internalizing work, Bruce dreamed the following: “There is a new and very small young boy at school. He comes over and sits on Bruce’s lap and wants to tell Bruce all about himself.” (I remind the reader of the boy on Kobe Bryant’s lap.)

In a dream shortly after this one, Bruce sees his mother too busy to notice an unattended similar little boy. The negative, judging,

“minister” part of himself is up on a balcony glaring at and spying on the boy, but an old Russian woman gives the boy both rubles and dollars. Bruce takes the little boy away from the neglectful mother and the “judge,” and they go up and outside. The little boy now has a small white puppy with him. Bruce sweeps the boy up in his arms and hugs him. The boy wants to go to New York (where I was then practicing). Bruce tells him yes but that they have to take care of the puppy first.

With some integration of the shadow, this young boy—a more natural and feeling aspect of himself—can appear and reveal himself to Bruce. They relate well with each other. The Old Woman, in the guise of a foreigner, the Russian woman, gives the new masculine feeling aspect both conscious and unconscious energy. The dog is animal nature, but now in a domesticated, young form, which can be cared for and tended. Bruce’s feeling that he can do some of the work himself—tend his own young boy and young animal nature himself—takes on significance because of his growing dependence on my holding and containing him in analysis. Along the way, his sometimes slightly self-righteous, minister-like persona had completely fallen away.

At this time, a lot of our work was not on reintegrating and revaluing the masculine and the feminine but on a regression to basic pre-Oedipal infancy issues. These often needed a careful, *amae*-like attention and cherishing so that Bruce’s armored self could relax and disarm. He began to experience enough safety to risk growing a more tensile, feeling skin to replace the armor.<sup>9</sup> Bruce felt secure enough now to surrender and feel his dependency, his sense of abandonment, and his crucial need for steady attachment and mirroring.

It was a stormy time for both of us, for Bruce now raged at me for all the minor and sometimes big failures I made while holding him. It was not so much the outer detail: something as small (to me, that is) as asking him not to mail me things I had to sign for (as it disturbed other patients), as, for him, the inner feeling of my complete rejection and abandonment of him. It re-created his torment as a child whose place was taken again and again by another new baby. To recall his first dream, Bruce had to take turns, and I, in projection, became his mother, who no longer had time for him or his needs. As his analyst, however, I could hear the loneliness, outrage, and pain this had caused. Bruce’s

aggression and hostility seemed, at times, crazy to him, as did his almost paranoid need to unlink from me at the same time he clung to me. Countertransferentially, I felt a baby inquisitor was searching for errors in my care of him, and I often felt I was turned into his neglectful and somewhat seductive mother. At the same time, he had an uncanny knack for finding my all-too-real faults and failings.

What a way for an infant self to gain autonomy and trust! I did both cherish and respect him, but I sometimes had to hand over his care to the archetypal Old Woman standing behind my chair while I bit my tongue to not lash back at Bruce for his attacks.

At the time of this necessary regression and reintegration, we were over two years into the analysis. Bruce dreamed that parts of the inside of his house were a mess and were now under repair. The house would not become livable until he made a journey to Africa (another descent) and came safely back again. The little girl named Joy reappeared as an African girl, now age six or seven, but she still could not live with him, she told him, because of his possibly somewhat sexualized attitude toward her. She said she did not think her mother would approve.

Jung writes that a person's house represents the inner self and its condition. Bair, in her biography of Jung, quotes him as saying, "A house depicts a situation in life. One is in it as one is in a situation." She goes on to report that "he noted that, when patients brought him dreams of houses, or even when he dreamed of them, they were always unfinished, always in need of another room, or there was always a mysterious corridor attached to one's actual residence that led to rooms that were not there in reality. And when the dreamer awakened, there was always a conscious feeling that one should 'solve the question of this house, to do something with it.'"<sup>10</sup>

In Bruce's case, we were doing the necessary early infantile construction and repair work on the parts of his emotional house that needed renovation. This helped him gain a new attitude and balance. It also made him see how his projections messed up his inner living quarters. The psyche advised Bruce, however, that he needed to go to Africa first and regain a more natural and primeval part of himself and a less wounded attitude toward the feminine before the little African girl could return. The matriarchal substrate was now no longer

represented by antediluvian creatures and descending to the depths but by geographically distant unknowns like traveling to darkest Africa or being helped by someone from Russia.

A few months later, toward the close of this period of regression and consolidation, Bruce dreamed that the African girl did indeed come to live with him and his wife, for they now had two little girls: "One is a delightful new little black girl about seven. She has a big gap in her front teeth; is dressed in white and has a big smile. She makes us all so happy." Bruce recognized her as Joy.

As this was happening in Bruce's dream world and in his unconscious, his traditional ego-position made a last stand. Bruce raged at me again and almost brought his analysis to an end. At one point, he decided to terminate because, as he wrote, "I experienced rage, anger, and bitterness against you, Claire, and women in general for draining (sucking out of me) my power, reducing me to a wimp! I lashed out, calling you every blasphemous name under the sun. These feelings are connected with the dream where I broke my best friend's rose colored glasses I was wearing. I destroyed my rose-colored view of the feminine [the other, Virgin Mary, side of his and his socioculture's habit of sexualizing and demeaning women]." Bruce went on to accuse me of trying to castrate him and of engaging in a regressive rather than an evolutionary process with him. In *Active Imagination*, I was turned from the Aphrodite-like anima figure into Red Riding Hood, then into the ancient Grandmother, who became bestial as she took her true wolf form. Thus, from the gentle holding, nurturing mother, we now had to deal with the other side of the Old Woman in her wrathful form and as the carrier of the Terrible Mother archetype.

My good relationship with Vajrayogini, the Blue She-wolf Tara, Kali, and other aspects of the powerful Dark Feminine that have been turned so monstrous helped me here. This is because I could see Bruce's projection as rising out of fear of the Old Woman's power. It was a power with which I was starting to be familiar, and I was learning when to veil my face against its intensity. Thus, I did not have to be seized by her, or identify with her, or act out her wolfishness. I knew the great strength of the archetype and that those who serve her with respect seldom need to feel her wrath.

I had not interpreted Bruce's work on early-infancy issues in a Kleinian way, as I felt the images and feelings he was producing and the dreams he reported showed he was finding his own way. In retrospect, some mapping of the terrain might have eased the journey for both of us. The archetypal potency of the many-sided Great Mother and the suffering of the human infant often filled the room with their energy. I had no wish to defend myself but tried to contain him and his rage as he met the Terrible Mother or the Kleinian bad breast (me) head on. My analytic and human stance here was to hold, contain, and cherish Bruce in a way that humanized the archetypal energy the best I could. I knew it was not about me and also knew about wrestling with my own archetypal rage in places deep inside me that had never been humanized. Our work together humanized by our bearing witness in a cherishing way. We bore witness, as best we could, to the suffering Bruce endured as one of the atrocities experienced, yet too often sealed up, inside us all. I trusted his dreams to show him a way out of his suffering, but I also feel now that some classical interpretation here might have helped him. And, except for the fact that he was a working man who had to travel into the city to see me, we needed more sessions than once a week and the once or twice a week phone sessions in between. They, and therefore I, failed to hold him securely enough at this difficult time.

There followed several dreams in which it was suggested and then ordered that he "slow down." He decided not to terminate, but he also started to see a male analyst in his own town (this lasted for only a few sessions). The reasons Bruce gave me were that the therapist was male and would give him a masculine perspective, and it would be easier (both geographically and emotionally) to see him.

Suddenly, and at the same time, Bruce wanted, or insisted we needed, a personal relationship. All of this I took to be, using the image of my current dream, a Kobe Bryant-like attempt to possibly forcibly enter into a relationship with the feminine. Bruce's psyche came to the rescue again as he dreamed he, as a young boy, was pointing his erection threateningly at some woman he identified with me.

I quote his summation of the sense he made out of all this upheaval: "The not available woman may well be a projection of my desire for



my mother's love transferred in the dream onto Claire, and the erection pointed at her an aggressive non-sexual act—a reaction to her unavailability which triggers the process of: abandonment, feelings of rejection, anger.” He faulted me for sexualizing the dream. I had, indeed, interpreted it as sexualized anger and stressed its hostile aspects. I had focused on his hostility to the analysis and his wish to destroy it through sexualizing our relationship; I also wanted him to look at his anger at the woman (women) who he felt had too much power over his young self. Bruce quoted the analyst E. C. Whitmont as saying that an analyst may misinterpret the dream symbols as sexual when, in fact, they may simply reflect the dreamer's desire to gain unavailable (rejected) love. I think Bruce may have been surprised when I considered this and said that I might have insufficiently valued his longing for connection and relationship, that it might well have been an error on my part, but for him also to ponder the threatening aspect. I did not quote Jung to him but felt, all too well, the truth of Jung's statement that “the case is not in the least a story of triumph; it is more like a saga of blunders, hesitations, doubts, groping in the dark, and false cues which in the end took a favorable turn.”<sup>11</sup>

I am so grateful to Bruce at this point for both pondering, and then taking back, the projection, because I was feeling that I was losing my connection both to him and to the Old Woman. I felt a deep bond with him and was also moved by his dedication to his analytic work, but all the woman and Claire bashing that was going on and the urge to make me into a sexual object raised my feminist hackles. I felt the rage of an outlawed, despised, and sexualized Kali. I began to feel possessed by the negative side of the Old Woman and wanted to project my fury onto Bruce, and then I was not at all sure whether it was my rage or his. I had to spend precious time in my own supervision and training analysis both working hard on digesting and integrating my own anger at the patriarchy (with Bruce as its symbol!) and correcting my own heretofore too-rose-colored view of the Mother archetype and the feminine in general. Just because the Old Woman has been so demonized was no excuse for my trying to turn her into an all-good object. She is much too powerful for that and deserves far more respect.

The alchemical mix of Bruce's and my mutual work resulted in his linking of the threatening erection to an early memory of a bathtub scene in which his mother laughed at his erect little body, and he felt enraged. He wrote, "Now ponder the possibility of this pattern projected sexually on women in my life and Claire in the transference. I deceive myself; I use them, and abuse them—never expecting to receive what I really want—thinking that what I want is sex. And when they (e.g., Claire) offer the cherishment I unconsciously seek, I reject it—angrily—feeling rejected because I think I am not getting what I think I want—sex—but what is behind that is a desire for love and attention—relatedness?—non-abandonment and not sex."

Bruce slowly became aware of his mother's unwitting assault on his sense of his masculine self and of his almost Adlerian "will to power" as a consequence. He mourned his precarious and easily shamed sense of masculinity. He mourned his defense of himself and the way he protected himself by threatening the women in his life with his masculine power. As he wrestled to integrate all this, he had another house dream:

I had been working in a huge house off and on for a long time. A large family was living there and remodeling it. I went every morning to supervise. This morning, from the corner of my eye, I noticed the owner's wife wearing a tight orange sweater. She was very attractive. Instantly I turned away. Then I decided to turn and look directly at her face and greet her with a friendly "good morning." She smiled. I returned her smile simply and freely and also smiled at my shadow as he wasn't acting out. Then I was in a vast unused area upstairs I hadn't known was there.

In the dream, Bruce gained a new and less-loaded attitude toward women and could greet one simply in a friendly, nonsexualized way. What a relief! The dream also reflects his growth and his access to new energy: the huge new area he had not known was there.

We continued to weather storms that rose from both of our wounded masculine and feminine natures. Bruce's came from his up-

bringing, but also from a culture that devalued masculine feeling as it devalued the Old Woman and sexualized her daughter. His work on the Terrible Mother part of the Mother archetype, which started by his seeing, and sometimes being overwhelmed by, her negative side, strangely paralleled my work on adjusting my perhaps too positive and glowing feeling toward the Great Mother. It was a deeply corrective experience for both of us. Bruce and I constellated an antidote each for the other. I think we both learned and grew a lot from our struggles, as well as from the deep feeling of connectedness between us. There were increasingly minor storms and discords as he took back more and more projections and also accepted more and more of himself. I wish I could have told him of my own struggle with the Terrible Mother and my passionate exploration of the Old Woman's many other sides, but it is one of those things that bear fruit just as well, if not better, in silence.

Bruce had to return to the foundational basics of his character and experience. He accomplished this through dissolving his outward attitude in the world and his inner defenses (while I painfully integrated more aspects of myself). We had to return to his primordial essence to help him free his energy, trust his own feeling nature, and let him learn how to merge, flow, and release. The alchemical retort at times grew murky and so black that neither of us could see our way. Here Jung's alchemical model for analysis proved of inestimable value:

This situation is distressing for both parties; often the doctor is in much the same position as the alchemist who no longer knew whether he was melting the mysterious amalgam in the crucible or whether he was the salamander glowing in the fire. Psychological induction inevitably causes the two parties to get involved in the transformation of the third and to be themselves transformed in the process, and all the time the doctor's knowledge, like a flickering lamp, is the one dim light in the darkness . . . "*Ars requirit totum hominem*" [This art requires the whole person], we read in an old treatise. This is in the highest degree true of psychotherapeutic work. A genuine participation, going right beyond professional routine, is absolutely imperative, unless of

course the doctor prefers to jeopardize the whole proceeding by evading his own problems which are becoming more and more insistent. The doctor must go to the limits of his subjective possibilities, otherwise the patient will be unable to follow suit. Arbitrary limits are no use, only real ones. It must be a genuine process of purification where “all superfluities are consumed in the fire” and the basic facts emerge. Is there anything more fundamental than the realization, “This is what I am?” It reveals a unity which nevertheless is—or was—a diversity. No longer the earlier ego with its make-believes and false contrivances, but another “objective” ego, which for this reason is better called the “self.”<sup>12</sup>

We had a period of steady, deep work that started to focus on Bruce’s contemplation of his own anima, now far more human than the Aphrodite figure. In *Active Imagination*, Bruce asked her how she felt to be so naïve and inexperienced instead of more evolved. He asked her how she got hurt/wounded and what he could do to help her. He related that she told him she felt walled in, that she was afraid to come out because every time she did, he snapped at her and did not let her speak or would not listen to her. She told him she could not take much more of it. “I love you,” she said, “but I want to be a woman in my own right. I want to play with you, but you frighten me.” Bruce then remembered all the times he had not paid attention to her or had treated her, and the women in his life, harshly or dismissively. He continued, “I am so sorry for the way I have treated her—including the idea she is naïve and inexperienced when, in fact, it is I who am naïve. I pleaded for the opportunity to prove my love and understanding and promised to do my best to please her—to allow her to be free to be herself. She said she has always tried, but that I should be alert and learn to play. If I’m not and won’t, then I’m more than likely to continue meeting up with her in her witch form.”

There were periods of questioning and doubt, and Bruce’s old habits reasserted themselves, but the tone became much different, and he used images of his inner anima guide and inner negative witch

to help him steer his own way. The Terrible Mother still occasionally appeared to him in dreams, but now he had a way of seeing behind her to what had triggered her rage. After one instance of this, he dreamed of an equal—a friendly woman graduate student. In the dream, Bruce is in church in front of the altar with her, sweeping up a mess on the floor in front of the altar. He feels a little embarrassed because there is a mess but can accept the fact that he probably caused it, can clean it up, and it is just a regrettable part of life.

The Old Woman as Terrible Mother slowly started to reveal a helpful guiding side. For instance, after a series of more wholesome anima figures in dreams, Bruce found himself, in outer life, in a dubious and troubling situation in which he knew he needed a new attitude but wanted to fall back into his old one. The dream that night was just of a voice announcing, “Try the Hag! The experience may help you withdraw your projections.” So with the help of the Hag and consulting with me (both the hag’s representative and the Daughter aspects of the Old Woman), Bruce made his way through a delicate and quite perilous situation that kept him in good relationship with his younger inner and external anima figures. It was not without cost, experimentation, and sacrifice.

As if to help him, Bruce then dreamed that he, his wife, and little Joy were twelve feet up on a cliff above a lake. He was spading dirt down into the lake both to feed something and to make the drop less steep. He went on:

Two strange part duck-like, part human, animals came out of the water and up to me. The first had a feminine face—like an old Japanese woman. It was a beautiful face—full of caring and feeling—compassion, with a long faraway look as though she had found what she had been searching for but couldn’t quite accept it. I was very moved/touched by the feeling of being bonded with her. [He noted that, as a type, he saw her as the Wise Old Woman, what I had recently called the Crone.] I call my wife to come look at her. She says, “Wait till you see the other: a little old man with a wise Jewish face.”

• • •

So both he and his internal and external feminine are reunited with old and wise aspects of themselves. The duck is related to both Isis and Penelope in ancient tales. Even farther back, the duck represents that part of the Great Mother Goddess that knows how to dive deep to feed on the wisdom of the depths. She is commonly representative of “feminine energies . . . and the emotional state of humans . . . Ducks can remind us to drink of the waters of life as well as nurture our own emotional natures.”<sup>13</sup> So Bruce’s strange part-human part-animal duck could be seen to represent what he first projected onto me: his ability to safely descend for the wisdom he needed, to be at home both in the conscious world (the air) and the unconscious (the water). His chthonic self was imaged by a creature primarily representing his long-neglected feeling state.

Bruce summed up the months of turmoil by writing in his journal: “My life is shattered. There is no semblance of me of myself from the past. My vision of who I am, what I might become, is both exciting and scary. I long for it and run from it. I want so much to consummate new relations—seeking ultimate relatedness—total freedom—to be and become. My marriage restricts this; forbids it. Yet I cannot dissolve it. Duty and responsibility is meaningless without commitment—if to no other at least to God—the God within myself.” Bruce then listed the things he appreciated about his wife and concluded by bringing his analytic work into it: “Better divorce myself from Claire than from my wife. That’s it!! Little Brucey is in a pickle wanting to separate from his mother but at the same time is frightened with the idea of going it alone, becoming his own free man, and all my fears I still project onto Claire.”

He continued, with this accomplished: “I look inside and see Brucey wearing a huge smile; Joy’s square white teeth are also exposed. He is happy; she is happy. He wants to make it; she wants to make it. I hope we all do. We are all going to try like hell.”

So now the lunar car holds the young feminine and young masculine both tended by older parts of the psyche. The Old Woman, her Daughter, and her Daughter’s children are in harmony and with a Wise Old Man archetype added as well. This feels very much to

me like a weaving together and integration of the disparate parts of Bruce's self. It also reunites the masculine with the feminine that reunites the family of my dream.

I will end my presentation of this recovery of the many aspects of the Old Woman and her Daughter and the weaving together done in Bruce's analytic work with a final dream. We continued our work together, deepening it and still having moments of misunderstanding and anger as well as an increasingly deeper connection until I left New York for California. This was about fifteen years ago. Our work had been done, and Bruce's inner family had grown, as had all their abilities to care for each other. As Jung writes (and I quote earlier), "It reveals a unity which nevertheless is—or was—a diversity. No longer the earlier ego with its make-believes and false contrivances, but another 'objective' ego, which for this reason is better called the 'Self.'"<sup>14</sup>

Bruce's final dream during our work together used car symbolism, as did my dream of the weaving together of the masculine and the feminine, youth and old age. In this dream, Bruce has a truck (to me, a very masculine image) instead of the car: "I am like a truck driver whose work brings him to particular places. My work is not driving the truck. Yet I do. And the particular places I go to are not concrete geographic places but places where I end up depending on the work I have to do while not driving the truck. As I drive I realize I can see for hundreds of miles on the horizon in all directions—360 degrees. I am free; free to move in any direction I choose. It does not matter." It does not matter because Bruce is free to be the man he is.

In this chapter I have attempted to track the images of the Old Woman, her Daughter, and her Daughter's children that appeared in one patient's dreams. I have tried to demonstrate the alchemical weaving together of his disparate parts, which came about through his acceptance and development of his inner feminine and his genuine engagement with both his analyst and his material and the alchemical weaving of his work with that of his analyst. Both of us were willing to have a genuine engagement with our own material and with each other. In the process, at one time or another, each of our larger selves

(the true Self) came to the rescue, as one or more parts of each of our unconscious threatened to scatter and split off into their own disruptive complexes. I hope I have also demonstrated the deep cherishment, what Ellen Siegelman refers to as analytic love, I felt and feel for Bruce as well as Bruce's learning to cherish the Old Woman in both himself and in me.



## *Afterword*

We have gone on a long and, I hope, fruitful journey in this book. In the Introduction, using a dream that pictures, in archetypal images, the book's underlying frame, I describe how the unconscious assisted in the creation of its form. As I wove the parts of the book together, I found the Old Woman's voice in my own psyche, shaping the book into a more organic whole. I have tried to communicate the struggle it is for most women, including me, to find, reweave, and put into words what we know. I wrote of my Scottish grandmother and how she and her wisdom were silenced, then almost forgotten, by a more modern "scientific" age. This book is one more effort to reclaim my grandmother's essence and to save and restore her—our—true mother tongue. My purpose has been to reknit the connections our culture and our education excels in ripping apart.

In Chapter 1, I consider some of our inherited attitudes toward the feminine. I trace, through historical and personal history, the ways these attitudes kept the Old Woman in serpent form and her daughter as a beautiful young girl, blind, and not fully developed. I also point to areas of hope that hold a more constructive and healing view.

Next, I present potent images of the Mother archetype that fill a gap in our Western psyches. They, especially the figures of Vajrayogini and Tara, represent the long-repressed chthonic feminine. But they represent it in a consciously developed form that is both redemptive and sacred. These images satisfy our longing and our love, communicating, as they do, the Old Woman's power and her many-sided ability to cherish and contain. They give us hope that we can reclaim a more complete and authentic feminine nature and be more fully human. These

multifaceted images are badly needed. Internalized, they help transfigure the snake and the girl and reclaim feminine potency. They support us as we face our own humanity: our life and inevitable death. Their at-homeness with both life and death allays our fears and may help us live more fully, as well.

Accepting the Old Woman, as I write in Chapter 2, is not only a personal problem but also a vital collective one. Jung noted this in *The Visions Seminar* in the 1930s,<sup>1</sup> when he alluded to the unconscious power of the suppressed archaic feminine and his fear of its violent eruption, especially in Nazi Germany. The problem remains as threatening in our increasingly polarized and violent world as it was then. And many would doubt that we have made significant progress. Individuals, nations, and religions worldwide continue to repress and split off rejected parts of the psyche, virulently projecting them out onto others. That is why it remains essential for us to break our identification with any one aspect of life or one part of human multidimensionality. We need to reclaim all of ourselves and integrate the Old Woman's capacity to be everything she is.

In the third chapter, I look at the Motherline and cherishment in therapy, trace some of their antecedents, and then ponder the ways in which therapy and our being in the world is deepened and enlivened through incorporating the multifaceted Old Woman. Because she helps us accept and become all that we are, her influence shapes and changes both therapy and one's relation in the world. The Old Woman's presence supports a theory that stems from a mother tongue of interconnectedness. It values feeling as much as, if not more, than rationality. It helps rebuild our capacity to accept all of ourselves rather than project the unacceptable out onto others.

A cherishing form of therapy and a cherishing way of being in the world cultivate feeling attunement as well as focused attention. It envisions both the larger Self, which knows its own healing path, and the smaller self, which gets caught in pain and dysfunction. It values the body and body-states and uses the therapist's, or individual's, own ability to calm and center herself or himself to help the anxiety and panic so present in patients and in the daily world. The Old Woman's Motherline taps into the healing energies present everywhere. It

chooses these while remaining aware of the fundamental opposition in human nature between them and a death instinct that wants to split and destroy. In face of the growing nihilism in the world, it offers the ancient knowledge that what an individual does in the world and the choices he or she makes affect us all.

And, finally, in Chapter 4, I give an example of a cherishing form of therapy that struggled as best it could to be open to all the oppositions present in the psyche and to make room for them. The story takes on an alchemical form as one man and his analyst journeyed toward a deeper, more inclusive, and healing relationship with both themselves and each other, as well as with the Old Woman, her Daughter, and her Daughter's children.

Integrating the Old Woman, whether in ourselves or in our anima, and learning to be her Daughter give us a chance to provide a much-needed alternative for ourselves and for the world. It is an alternative that is motivated by clear-eyed, accepting love for the totality that makes up each one of us. The Old Woman is fiercely compassionate and nurturing; she is attentively appreciative of the welfare of each of us and our fate on this planet. Honoring her, and incorporating what she has to teach us, helps rebalance the world. She gives us expanded inner awareness, and her values can help us redefine what we think we need in our outer and inner lives.

It is a rebalancing that loves peace more than war, that seeks harmony more than division, serenity and kindness more than frantic acquisitiveness. Above all, she helps us realize that we are all interconnected. We understand, thereby, that another's well-being (whether that of a single person, a nation, or a planet) is the best guarantee of our own.

And yet, there is another side of the Old Woman that appears when, as Jung said in *The Visions Seminar*, she is repressed, ignored, or rejected. Jung spoke of the danger inherent in disregarding the image of archaic feminine power and the equal danger of being overcome by the destructive sides of the Mother archetype. He warned that, through neglecting her, "a negative content becomes more negative. People who disregard the chthonic factor are injured by the chthonic factor."<sup>2</sup>

Whether the suppressed archaic feminine power erupts in violence, or in the overconsumption and frantic emptiness with which we increasingly fill our lives, its lack of a conscious place within our psyches harms us all. With this lack comes the prevalence of desperation, psychological depression, anxiety, and hopeless despair so many people feel today. These feelings are accompanied by a sense of gloomy dread as well as personal worthlessness: nothing we can do can affect a world gone mad in its arrogant, power-hungry excesses.

Affirming totality and wholeness means not projecting this madness onto the outside world. It means each one of us accepting and including our Old Woman's true rage, grief, and suffering, as well as the cataclysmic part of her nature—all as a part of our own psyche. This part, when recognized and suffered, does not split off, nor does it spin out into atrocity.

Many writers and thoughtful people are saying the same thing today in different ways. All are trying to get away from our Judeo-Christian-Mohammedan divisiveness, our ages of reason, which split everything into good and bad, black and white, with the negative most often projected out onto the other. This way of thinking now threatens our survival and our planet. Jung knew this when he represented the large Self as including the shadow and the negative and described its healing and interconnected qualities.

In conclusion, I want to mention very briefly the ideas of four other writers from different disciplines, all men who serve the Old Woman. I do this in order to connect my book and my comprehension of the Old Woman with men and other women of heart who are playing different parts of the same music.

Bill McKibben, in *Enough*, argues for the Old Woman's loving respect for nature and ourselves through what he calls the "enough point." This is an ecological, Green Tara, kind of balance and harmony, which contrasts markedly with the crazed overproduction, all-consuming track we are on. "We need to do an unlikely thing: We need to survey the world we now inhabit and proclaim it good. Good enough."<sup>3</sup> This calls for restraint and for an openness to interconnections in which what one of us does affects us all. It requires feeling attunement as well as focused attention.

Art Spiegelman, in his magnificent attempt to face the atrocities of the last few years, *In the Shadow of No Towers*, states at the beginning of the book, “I tend to be easily unhinged.”<sup>4</sup> He opens himself to the feelings of panic, rage, fear, and sorrow he felt as he witnessed the attack on the World Trade Center at close range and finds these feelings magnified by his horror of the political and global mayhem that have ensued. Permitting himself to feel despair and to suffer redeems a piece of humanity. His finding some comfort and solace in his neighborhood, like his understanding of the collective aspect of his suffering, seems the start of a healing interconnectedness with others. One of the most powerful ways he does this is by noting the Holocaust’s similarities to the violent excesses now happening across the world.

Steven Batchelor, in *Living with the Devil: A Meditation on Good and Evil*, describes Buddha Nature in similar terms to those that describe the Old Woman: a cherishing, open perspective to all that is within one and out of which one can respond to, and love, others. This consideration for others rises from a respect for one’s own totality. He describes Mara Nature (one’s own devil nature) as a fixed, reactive, projection-making position that is as closed to transformation as it is to others’ ideas, or to love. It divides itself from everything not within its frozen ego position. Both Buddha Nature and Mara Nature are present in all of us, but one leads to growth and peace while the other petrifies and leads to war.

Finally, what I have called the Old Woman, the feminine Self, British psychoanalyst Neville Symington calls an attitude of heart and soul that is open, accepting, and cherishing of all that is within it. In his brilliant re-creation of psychoanalytic theory, *A Pattern of Madness*,<sup>5</sup> Symington names the Old Woman’s attitude a pattern of sanity. He describes it with many of the same attributes I have given her. It is inclusive, interconnected, relational, motivated by feeling values and emotions, and is able to embrace both good and bad feelings as part of the self. Symington defines sanity as consisting of “acceptance of all parts of the personality, and madness consists in hatred and non-acceptance of large parts of the personality,”<sup>6</sup> which are then split off, suppressed, and projected out into others. Therapy and healing take place through choosing the pattern of sanity, through the reknitting

of split-apart fragments, and through relationship with a therapist who can embrace all parts of his or her own personality. The therapist, constantly attuned to the patterns of sanity and madness present, acts with relaxed ease. This attunement and ease help the patient or others in the world transform and regain integrity. Symington's description of the therapist reminds me of Jung's story of the Rainmaker who had to put himself in harmony so that the world and nature would be in harmony.<sup>7</sup>

As a coda, let me put this in dream imagery. Throughout the few years it has taken me to write this book, I have often been accompanied in my dreams by a little girl. She is always in Vajrayogini red and has dark hair and reddish, glowing skin. But she is often upset: crying at houses burning, at people wandering needy and without homes, sobbing as each horror in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and in our prisons unfolds, inconsolable as starving children go crying to their graves. She does not speak, maybe cannot, but her grief-stricken, and sometimes crazed, howls tear me apart. I often start to wonder what unanalyzed piece of my psyche she represents and what part of my own traumas I need to revisit. But then I see her glowing aura and know she has something far more than personal to teach me. All I ever do in my dreams is hold her in my arms, embrace her, and feel her anguish, night after night.

Last night, she came to me from a looted town laid waste by floods and winds. I put her on soft blankets and was drying her rain-bloated body with gentle wafts of warm air, sometimes just blowing my warm breath on her skin, when she turned toward me. She opened her mouth to show me her tongue. The end must have been separated somehow, and that was why she had no words, but a little circle of new white skin had formed right in the middle, to heal the split.

Her healed tongue looks like any other, but, in my view, it is far more beautiful. She will still cry at the pain in the world and feel its traumas as her own. I will still hold her in my arms and soothe her as best I can. But now one of the Old Woman's Daughters can choose to start to speak if she so desires, and there are many of us who are ready to listen.

# Notes

## Foreword

1. Saint Hildegard, *Mystical Writings*, translated by Robert Carver; edited by Fiona Bowie and Oliver Davies (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 91.
2. David Rosen, *Transforming Depression: Healing the Soul through Creativity*, 3d ed. (York Beach, Me.: Nicolas-Hays, 2002), v.
3. Marion Woodman, *The Stillness Shall Be Dancing*, audio book (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994); Polly Young-Eisendrath, *Gender and Desire: Uncursing Pandora* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997); Sonoko Toyoda, *Memories of Our Lost Hands: Searching for Feminine Spirituality and Creativity* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, in press); and Clarissa Pinkola Estés, *La Curandera: Healing in Two Worlds* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, in press).
4. Sue Monk Kidd, *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1996).
5. C. G. Jung, *Collected Works: The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, translated by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), vol. 9, no. 1: 81.

## Introduction

1. Percy, *To Be of Use*, 38.
2. Cixous and Clément, *Newly Born Woman*, 6.
3. See esp. C. G. Jung, *Seminar on Dream Analysis*; idem, *The Visions Seminar*; idem, *Nietzsche's Zarathustra*. See also Douglas, *Translate This Darkness*.
4. See esp. Begg, *Cult of the Black Virgin*; Gustafson, *Black Madonna*; Gal-land, *Longing for Darkness*.

## Chapter 1

The epigraph comes from Dickinson, *Poems by Emily Dickinson*, 129.

1. C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 181.
2. Bogan, *Blue Estuaries*, 19.
3. Darwin quoted in Figes, *Patriarchal Attitude*, 114.
4. See, e.g., Douglas, *Woman in the Mirror*; Ellenberger, *Discovery of the Unconscious*; Irigary, *Sex Which Is Not One*; Roazen, *Cultural Foundation of Political Psychology*.
5. See esp. Ehrenreich and English, *For Her Own Good*; also Creed, *Monstrous Feminine*; Ellenberger, *Discovery of the Unconscious*; and Neumann, *Fear of the Feminine*.
6. Roscher and Hillman, *Pan and the Nightmare*, viii.
7. Gilbert and Gubar, *Woman in the Attic*; Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon*.
8. Mill, *Subjection of Women*, 22–23.
9. Watson, *Psychological Care of Infant and Child*, 81–82.
10. Deutsch, *Psychology of Women*. See also Roazen, *Helene Deutsch*.
11. This was a common treatment for neurasthenic women and popular on both sides of the Atlantic in the late 1800s to the mid-1900s; see the writings of psychiatrists and medical doctors George Beard, James Jackson Putnam, S. Weir Mitchell, and George Waterman. See also Douglas, *Translate This Darkness*, 48–50; and Gillman, *Yellow Wallpaper*, for her story of her treatment under the directives of S. Weir Mitchell.
12. Estés, *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, 5.
13. See esp. Bettelheim, *Dialogues with Mothers*; idem, *Love Is Not Enough*; and Pollak, *Creation of Dr. B*.
14. Spitz, *First Year of Life*.
15. C. G. Jung, “Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype,” 83, para. 159.
16. Cixous and Clément, *Newly Born Woman*, 97.
17. Winnicott, *Parent-Infant Relationship*.
18. Spock, *Dr. Spock’s Baby and Child Care*.
19. *The Visions Seminar* contains much of value on Jung’s and his culture’s attitudes toward the psychology of women but in too dispersed a form to encapsulate here. See also Douglas, ed., *C. G. Jung’s The Visions Seminar*, ix–xxxiii.
20. Neumann, in *Psychological Stages of Feminine Development and Amor and Psyche*, does the same for feminine development.
21. Gebser, *Ever-present Origin*; Neumann, *Origins and History of Consciousness*; Whitmont, *Return of the Goddess*.
22. See Douglas, *Woman in the Mirror*, and idem, “Hexagram 4 of the



- I Ching,” for a discussion of some of Jung’s encounters with this in his own life.
23. C. G. Jung, “Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype,” 87, para. 167.
  24. *Ibid.*, 92, para. 172.
  25. *Ibid.*, 97, para. 181.
  26. *Ibid.*, 89–90, para. 169.
  27. *Ibid.*
  28. *Ibid.*, 97, para. 182.
  29. *Ibid.*, 90–91, para. 170.
  30. Bem, “Probing the Promise of Androgeny”; idem, *Lenses of Gender*; idem, *Unconventional Marriage*.
  31. This is a point thoroughly explored by such psychologists as Chodorow, *Reproduction of Mothering*; Dinnerstein, *Mermaid and the Minotaur*; Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*; Lowinsky, *Motherline*.
  32. C. G. Jung, “Psychological Aspects of the Kore,” 188, para. 316.
  33. Perera, *Descent to the Goddess*; Meador, *Uncursing the Dark*; idem, *Inanna*.
  34. C. G. Jung, “Psychological Aspects of the Kore,” 203, para. 383.
  35. See Douglas, *Woman in the Mirror*; and *San Francisco Jung Institute Library Journal*, 2003, which cites Clara Thompson, Karen Horney, Nancy Chodorow, and the French psychoanalysts Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, and Luce Irigaray on the Freudian side, and a long line of Jungian women starting from Emma Jung, Esther Harding, Barbara Hannah, and Beatrice Hinkle in Jung’s time, on to Irene de Castillejo, Hilde Binswanger, Jane Wheelwright, Ann Ulanov, Judith Hubback, and Sylvia Perera, in the 1950s through the 1980s, to Patricia Berry, Marion Woodman, Polly Young-Eisendrath, C. P. Estés, C. Douglas, and many others today.
  36. Horney, *Feminine Psychology*.
  37. See, for example, Marks and de Courtivron, eds., *New French Feminisms*.
  38. Chodorow, *Reproduction of Mothering*, 92–93. See also idem, *Power of Feelings*
  39. See, e.g., Emma Jung, *Animus and Anima*.
  40. See Douglas, *Woman in the Mirror*, and idem, “Hexagram 4 of the I Ching,” for a discussion of some of the permutations in Jung’s personal life.
  41. C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 171–72.
  42. C. G. Jung, *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos*, first privately printed as a booklet after 1916; also as Appendix V, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*.
  43. See Rosen, *Tao of Jung*, 5, 70, 106, 108, 109, for a discussion of the Ka.
  44. C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 192.
  45. *Ibid.*, 181.
  46. *Ibid.*, 182.
  47. *Ibid.*, 20.

48. Ibid., 180.
49. Post, *Jung and the Story of Our Time*, 168.
50. See esp. C. G. Jung, *The Visions Seminar*, and Douglas, *Translate This Darkness*.
51. From *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, quoted in Pagels, *Gnostic Gospels*, 31.

## Chapter 2

- Epigraph from Buddha Vandana, "Discourse on Loving Kindness," 27.
1. Saivism is an ancient pre-Aryan Indian esoteric sect honoring, often in cremation ground rites, feminine power and feminine deities ("the cult of the *mothers*," who were preeminent over their male consorts). Saivism's use of mantra and visualization, and its embrace of erotic and wrathful forms of the deity, as well as many of its nondual teachings and some of its texts themselves, were taken over by, or profoundly influenced, Tantric Buddhism, especially in Tibet. See also English, *Vajrayogini*; and Sanderson, "Saivism and the Tantric Traditions."
  2. Allione, *Women of Wisdom*.
  3. Whitmont, *Return of the Goddess*.
  4. C. G. Jung, "Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype," 75, para. 148.
  5. English, *Vajrayogini*, 1.
  6. See, e.g., Thongwa Tondon VI, *Sadhana of the Glorious CoEmergent Mother Vajrayogini*.
  7. Klein, *Meeting the Great Bliss Queen*; Simmer-Brown, *Dakini's Warm Breath*.
  8. Gimbutas, *Language of the Goddess*, 146–47.
  9. Neumann, *Great Mother*, 139–40.
  10. In Avalon, *Tantra of the Great Liberation*, 47–52.
  11. I am indebted to Barbara Black Koltuv, *Book of Lilith*, for my understanding of Lilith's history.
  12. Angier, *Woman*.
  13. Allione, *Women of Wisdom*, 22.
  14. Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 277.
  15. Sotheby's, *Catalogue*, item 49.
  16. Allione, *Women of Wisdom*, 29–30.
  17. Neumann, *Great Mother*, 233.
  18. Galland, *Longing for Darkness*, 30–31.
  19. Beyer, *Cult of Tara*.
  20. Willson, *In Praise of Tara*, 301–304.
  21. Shaw, ed., *Leaves from the Bodhi Tree*, 330.
  22. Mullin, *Female Buddhas*, 57.
  23. Galland, *Longing for Darkness*, 51.

24. Ibid., 341.
25. Dasara, comp., "21 Praises of Tara."
26. In doing research for this book, I discovered that Dasara had been a traveling companion for China Galland in India. A description of Dasara, her love for Tara, and their adventurous and hazardous trip is recounted in Galland, *Longing for Darkness*, 121–27.
27. Morgan, *Visions Notebooks*, "The Idol," vision of Nov. 26, 1926.
28. C. G. Jung, *The Visions Seminar*, Winter Term, lecture 6, March 8, 1933; Spring Term, May 3, May 10, and May 17, all in vol. 2: 947–1001.
29. Ibid., 950.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 956.
32. Ibid., 956–57.
33. Ibid., 963.
34. Ibid., 980.
35. Ibid., 994.

### Chapter 3

Epigraph from Dalai Lama, *Dalai Lama in My Own Words*, 6.

1. On Buddhism's attraction for Western women, see esp. the work of Allione, English, Galland, Klein, Shaw, and Simmer-Brown.
2. Loewald, "Transference–Countertransference."
3. Winnicott, *Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment*.
4. Fromm-Reichmann, *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy*.
5. See, for instance, Post, *Jung and the Story of Our Time*, 57–58.
6. Bair, *Jung*, 381.
7. C. G. Jung, "Principles of Practical Psychotherapy," 9; see also idem, "Problems of Modern Psychotherapy," 71.
8. C. G. Jung, "Fundamental Questions of Psychotherapy," 116.
9. See, e.g., Marks and de Courtivron, eds., *New French Feminisms*; Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*; Oliver, ed., *French Feminist Reader*.
10. Cixous and Clément, *Newly Born Woman*, 78–79.
11. See esp. Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, and Surrey, *Women's Growth in Connection*; and Jordan, Hartling, and Walker, eds., *Complexity of Connection*.
12. Chodorow, *The Power of Feelings*, 273–74.
13. C. G. Jung, "Principles of Practical Psychotherapy," 7–8.
14. Douglas, *Woman in the Mirror*.
15. Woodman and Dickson, *Dancing in the Flames*.
16. Douglas, "Dancing in the Flames."
17. Lowinsky, *Stories from the Motherline*, 51.

18. Ibid., 18–19.
19. Ibid., 34–35.
20. Ibid., xi–xii.
21. Sullivan, *Psychotherapy Grounded in the Feminine Principle*, 23.
22. Ibid., xii.
23. Ibid., 181.
24. Wheelwright, quoted on back cover of *ibid.*
25. Siegelman, *Metaphor and Meaning in Psychotherapy*.
26. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 38.
27. Siegelman, *Metaphor and Meaning in Psychotherapy*, 179.
28. Searles, “Oedipal Love in the Countertransference.”
29. Boyer, *Countertransference and Regression*, xxii.
30. Young-Bruehl and Bethelard, *Cherishment*, 44.
31. Ibid., 108.
32. C. G. Jung, “Principles of Practical Psychotherapy.”
33. Wilkinson, “His Mother Tongue”; *idem*, “The Mind-Brain Relationship”; *idem*, “Undoing Trauma.”
34. Wilkinson, “Mind-Brain Relationship,” 83.
35. See esp. Wilkinson, “Undoing Trauma,” for a discussion of the ways trauma can be healed.
36. Thurman, *Infinite Life*, 31.
37. Estés, *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, 9.
38. Ibid., 3–4.
39. Ibid., 6.
40. Douglas, *Woman in the Mirror*, ref. 22.
41. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*; and Gilligan et al., eds., *Making Connections*.
42. C. G. Jung, “Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype,” 90.
43. See Conway, *Recovered Memories and False Memories*; and Pope and Brown, *Recovered Memories of Abuse*, for clear and unbiased investigations of an often-controversial subject.
44. For a further exploration of this subject, see Das, *Awakening the Buddhist Heart*; and Thurman, *Infinite Life*.
45. C. G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 328, para. 504. Jung writes, “This fact led my pupil Dr. Speilrein to develop her idea of the death-instinct, which was then taken up by Freud.”

## Chapter 4

Epigraph from C. G. Jung, *Word and Image*.

1. Jung quotations from Bair, *Jung*, 382–83.
2. C. G. Jung, “Problems of Modern Psychotherapy,” 71–73.

3. Grossman, *Ether Dome and Other Poems*, 68.
4. I use the term “night-town” following the famous “Ulysses in Night-Town” section that is the climax of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Here, his antihero, Leopold Bloom, goes down to the Mabbot Street entrance of Dublin’s Night-town, with its 562 brothels, and encounters the shadow side of Dublin and its (and Bloom’s own) repressed carnality. This sort of lurid-toned and “creepy” night-town of the psyche is a place often encountered in people’s dreams when they embark on deep shadow work.
5. C. G. Jung, “Problems of Modern Psychotherapy,” 73.
6. C. G. Jung, “Psychology of the Transference,” 198.
7. C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 189.
8. Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience*, 200–201.
9. See Anzieu, *Skin Ego*, for a thorough exploration of the skin as a mediator in relationship to both organic and social realities. See also Feldman, “A Skin for the Imaginal,” for a comprehensive, observation-based, and fascinating discussion of the psychic skin as border and as psychological container.
10. Bair, *Jung*, 297.
11. C. G. Jung, “Realities of Practical Psychotherapy,” 337.
12. C. G. Jung, “Psychology of the Transference,” 199.
13. Andrews, *Animal-Speak*, 134–35.
14. Jung, “Psychology of the Transference,” 199.

### *Afterword*

1. C. G. Jung, *The Visions Seminar*, vol. 2, May 10, 1933, 970–85.
2. *Ibid.*, 963.
3. McKibben, *Enough*, 109.
4. Speigelman, *In the Shadow of No Towers*.
5. I thank Barbara Stevens Sullivan for introducing me to Symington’s book through a review she wrote of it in the *San Francisco Jung Institute Library Journal*.
6. Symington, *Pattern of Madness*, 21.
7. C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, CW 14, 419–20n.



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