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# Feminine & Masculine Divine

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Modified by Bill Stifler

# *The Feminine Divine*

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Prehistoric artifacts depicting female figures from 30,000 – 5,000 BCE have been discovered in an area stretching from France to Siberia and as far south as Greece.



(Leonard and McClure 102)



## *Marija Gimbutas*

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According to the theory's primary advocate the worship of the Goddess of Life, Death, and Regeneration was a universal religion in Europe for some 30,000 years. Primitive societies "were Goddess-worshiping, female-centered, in harmony with their environments" (Leonard and McClure 104)



# *Terms*

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- **Matrilineal** – related by tracing common descent exclusively through females from a founding female ancestor.
- **Matrifocal** – Literally means focused on women. A residential arrangement in which a woman lives with and her children and sometimes her daughter's children, without coresident husbands or other adult men.
- **Matriarchy** – a social system ruled by mothers or women.

# Critics of the Goddess Theory

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*"Females in the Upper Paleolithic were the objects . . . of social control, male desire; . . . their place and functions in Paleolithic society were biologically determined."*

Conkety and Tringham. "Archeology and the Goddess: Exploring the Contours of Feminist Archeology."  
*Feminisms in the Academy.*

(Leonard and McClure 109)



# *Archetypes as Exemplars*

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Joseph Campbell has suggested that heroes can be viewed as “exemplars,” as models for behavior. Some modern psychologists have suggested schemes for identifying certain goddesses as exemplars of specific feminine traits.

# *The Goddess Within*

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## *Woolger and Woolger*

(Leonard and McClure 110-2)

*Independence* – Athena

Artemis

*Power* -

Hera

Persephone

*Love* -

Aphrodite

Demeter

# *The Goddess Within - Independence*

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*Woolger and Woolger*

(Leonard and McClure 110-2)

Athena (extroverted)  
Warrior Woman of the World

Competition, strategy, commerce

- Technology
- Warfare
- Politics
- Education
- Priestcraft
- Statecraft

Artemis (introverted)  
Heart of the Lonely Huntress

Solitude, attuned to her body

- Nature
- Virgin wilderness
- animals
- Moon
- Instinct

# *The Goddess Within - Power*

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*Woolger and Woolger*

(Leonard and McClure 110-2)

Hera (extroverted)  
Queen and Partner in Power

Social leader and traditionalist

- Political status quo
- Marriage
- Fidelity
- Family unity

Persephone (introverted)  
Medium, Mystic, Mistress of Dead

Spiritual leader and inspirationalist

- Mysticism
- Magic
- Spirituality

# *The Goddess Within - Love*

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*Woolger and Woolger*

(Leonard and McClure 110-2)

Demeter (mixed)  
Mother of Us All

Mother

- Children
- Selfless container
- Tireless provider
- Orderly, safe home

Aphrodite (mixed)  
Golden Goddess of Love

Lover

- Mature love
- Otherness
- Pursuit of beauty
- Emotional intensity
- Self-knowledge

# *Everywoman's Goddess*

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*Jean Shinoda Bolen*

(Leonard and McClure 112-113)

*Virgin* –

Artemis

Athena

Hestia

*Vulnerable* -

Hera

Demeter

Persephone

*Transformative* - Aphrodite

# Every Woman's Goddess - Virgin

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*Jean Shinoda Bolen*

(Leonard and McClure 112-3)

**Artemis**

Goddess of Hunt & Moon

Competitor and Sister

**Athena**

Goddess of Wisdom & Crafts

Strategist & Father's Daughter

**Hestia**

Goddess of the Hearth & Temple

Wise Woman & Maiden Aunt

- Independence and self-direction
- Need for autonomy
- Capacity for focus on the personally meaningful



# *Every Woman's Goddess - Vulnerable*

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*Jean Shinoda Bolen*

(Leonard and McClure 112-3)

Hera

Goddess of Marriage

Commitment Maker  
& Wife

Demeter

Goddess of Grain

Nurturer & Mother

Persephone

Maiden & Queen of Underworld

Receptive Woman  
& Mother's Daughter

- Relationship-oriented
- Need for affiliation and bonding
- Capacity for significant relationships



# *Every Woman's Goddess - Transformative*

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*Jean Shinoda Bolen*

(Leonard and McClure 112-3)

Aphrodite  
Goddess of Love & Beauty

Creative Woman & Lover

- Combines virgin and vulnerable
- Generates love, beauty, erotic attraction, sensuality, sexuality, and new life
- Chooses relationships but never victimized
- Inner image of women's desire for intense rather than permanent relationships
- Values creative process and open to change



# *Literary Character Types*

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Several scholars have suggested goddesses serve three basic literary roles:

- Goddesses of life
- Goddesses of death
- Goddesses of regeneration

(Leonard and McClure 113-4)



# *Goddesses of Life*

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- Mother Earth, Great Mother
- The material cosmos
- Nature
- The Primordial Sea
- Celestial Queen
- Universal Womb

“Goddesses of life, then, foster civilization and culture as queens and law-givers, as priestesses and culture-bringers, as warriors and strategists, as technicians and agriculturists, and as performers and artisans.”

(Leonard and McClure 115)

# *Goddesses of Death*

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- Tomb of Earth
- Queens of the Underworld
- Ancient wise women
- Witches, mediums, seers
- Fates

Goddesses of death are associated with the seasonal cycle of life and death and occult lore. They sometimes prey on infants and newborns. They may determine the length of life people have. They are often associated with darkness.

(Leonard and McClure 115-8)

# *Goddesses of Regeneration*

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- Virgins
- Nymphs
- Objects of sexual desire
- Inspiration for beauty
- Conquerors of the heart
- Insatiable lovers

“Thus, like the waxing and waning moon, regeneration goddesses are the keepers of the cosmic clock marking the season of fertility and growth and the season of sterility and death. Their pulsing sexual energies impel mortal creation to renew itself, and thus their influence redeems individual mortality through beauty, passion, and offspring.”

(Leonard and McClure 121)

# Female Archetypes

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- Athena –  
Warrior Goddess



- Artemis –  
Lonely Huntress

# *Female Archetypes*

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- Hera -  
Queen &  
Partner in Power



- Aphrodite –  
Goddess of Love

# *Female Archetypes*

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- Hestia –  
Goddess of the Hearth  
& Temple



- Demeter –  
Mother of Us All



# Female Archetypes

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- Persephone –  
Medium, Mystic

# *Masculine Divine*

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- “Dying Gods” who rise quickly, become consorts of the Great Goddess, and fall into death – the seasonal vegetative cycle.

(Leonard and McClure 185-8)

- Shaman figure that uses trances, chanting, and dancing to mediate between their people and supernatural powers.

(Leonard and

McClure 188)

# Sorcerer of Trois Freres

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Cave painting discovered in France and dated to approximately 13,000 BCE.

Note combined human and animal traits.

(Leonard and McClure 188)



# Male Archetypes

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- ***Fathers and Sons***

Primary deity in a pantheon is a male who often acts like earthly despots and frequently delegates day to day control of affairs to other deities

(Leonard and McClure 189-192)



- ***Kings and Judges***

Deity as monarchical power emphasizes safety, peace, and prosperity rather than family relationships

(Leonard and McClure 192-195)



# Male Archetypes

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## ○ ***Saviors and Sages***

*A savior bridges the gap between humanity and the deity and often willingly lays down his life (scapegoat)*

(Leonard and McClure 192-195)



## ○ ***Lords of Destruction and the Underworld***

Gods who represent war, death, disease, and famine in this world. Lords of the underworld are rulers of the land of the dead.

(Leonard and McClure 192-195)



# Male Archetypes

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## ○ *Tricksters and Shamans*

Tricksters are figures who invert or subvert the normal order, and they often use the ambiguities in language for personal advantage or to get out of trouble.

Shamans are ecstatic visionaries who travel secret roads that unify the Great Above, the Great Below, and the material world that lies between.

(Leonard and McClure 199-203)





# *Works Cited*

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