

Feminine Archetypes

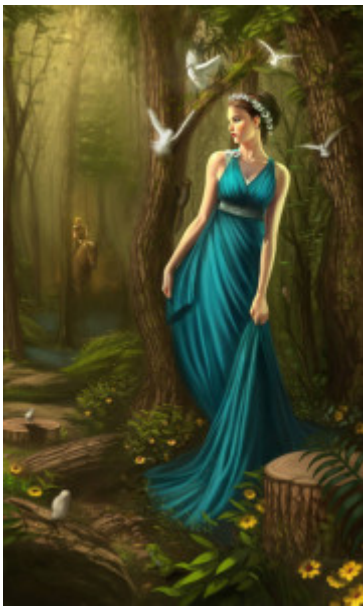
It was a true shock to me discovering that most ideas regarding feminine archetypes are based on Freud's *deficient woman with a penis complex* and Carl Jung's very classical and quite restricted roles of a woman such as *the mother, the wise woman, the lover and the queen*.

The fact that these images have determined a woman's possibilities how to fit into society over the last 200 years explains very well why a woman has still to deal with such an amount of resistance, punishment and ultimately guilt when she does not feel comfortable in any of these given roles

Thanks to Jungian analyst and MD **Jean Shinoda Bolen**, there are some more creative and appropriate variations to consider in studying feminine Archetypes. These fresh perspectives address the numerous phases and roles a woman goes through in her life time. In her book **'Goddesses in Every women'** Bolen integrates Greek Goddesses to explore the multi-faceted feminine psyche and address the various combinations when different archetypes / goddesses are present.

Seven Greek Goddesses are described from a colourful psychological perspective explaining some of the main behaviour & thought patterns a woman can be driven through in the different stages of her life. Everything from her preferences, attitude, choices of career and social life, as well as her judgemental behaviour and loyalty to certain people around her can be better understood by exploring these seven goddess archetypes and their characteristics.

They are divided in 3 Vulnerable Goddesses, 3 Virgin Goddesses and Aphrodite.



The 3 Vulnerable Goddesses are

Persephone – Maiden & Goddess of the Underworld

Hera – Goddess of Marriage

Demeter – the Nurturer & Mother.

These goddesses represent the more conservative Jungian like archetypes: daughter, wife and mother. They are called the Vulnerable Goddesses because they all are relationship-oriented whose identity and well-being depend on having a significant relationship.

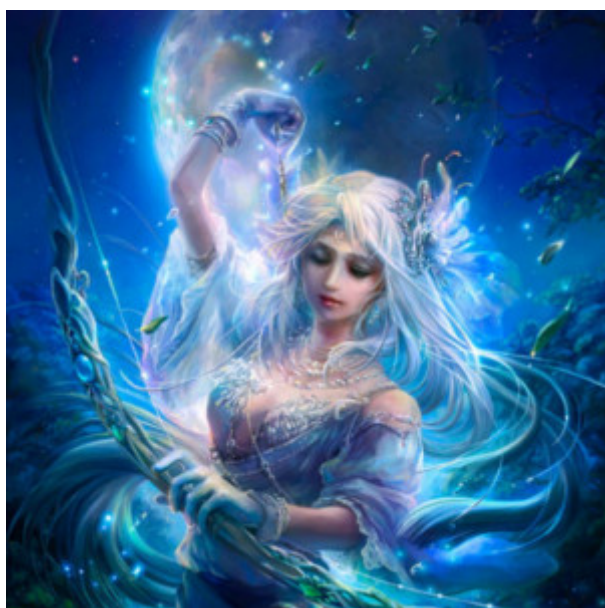
These goddesses are attentive and receptive to others with a capacity to become intimate with others and actually take care of their companions. These nurturing, loving qualities and ability to be loyal and make compromises, can easily lead to a self-destructive pattern when enduring enormous sacrifices for the sake of maintaining a certain relationship:

Persephone by dependence to some kind of authority figure
Hera by loyalty to her husband
Demeter by serving her children.

Their main motivation is any kind of reward of relationship: approval, love, attention.

In Mythology all three Goddesses have been raped, humiliated and dominated by male Gods which is translated in modern life by a strong dependence of a father, boss, husband, children and leads to strong suffering when these attachments are broken.

The more independent aspects of a woman's psyche are found in the 3 Virgin Goddesses:



[Artemis](#) – Goddess of the Hunt, Moon & Wildlife

[Athena](#) – Goddess of the Wisdom & Craft

[Hestia](#) – Goddess of the Hearth & Temple.

In Mythology none of these goddesses has been raped, hurt or damaged by any male God. They are One-in-Herself with a focused consciousness in what they are doing. This kind of woman does what she wants, not to be liked or to please anybody but because what she does is true. She is motivated by a need to follow her own inner values and gets full satisfaction in putting her convictions and passions into action.

When these goddesses are dominant a woman can easily get emotionally detached and become inattentive to others. She may lack any kind of empathy and compassion and has difficulties to create intimacy with anybody else.

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The seventh Goddess is [Aphrodite](#), Goddess of Love & Beauty, Creative Woman & Lover. She has a category all to her own, the Alchemical Goddess, representing the magic process or power of transformation that only she has.

Also known as *Venus*, She was the most beautiful of the goddesses and filled with irresistible charm. Every woman who falls in love with someone who is also in love with her is at that moment a personification of the Aphrodite archetype. Transformed temporarily from an ordinary mortal into a goddess of love, she feels attractive and sensual, an archetypal lover. Culture, religious institutions and moral codes have been diminishing these vital qualities and judge them as 'bad' or 'sin' by identifying them with expressions like "whore" or "prostitute". In some extremes those women were stoned and killed for these attributes, which sadly can be found in certain cultures still today.

Another very important quality dedicated to Aphrodite is any form of creativity. This can be expressed in many different ways such as art, poetry, music or fashion.

Aphrodite's strong ability to love or be loved can be very destructive, for herself and others. A woman with a strong Aphrodite archetype has not her own interest in mind as she easily and willingly falls in love with characters who may not be good for her which often has fatal consequences for herself and the people involved.

Over the next few weeks, we will have a closer look to each one of these Goddesses and their characteristics. We explore how to use their potential, how to grow with their challenges and how to activate them to be more present in daily life. I hope this journey into the diverse world of these [Powerful Greek Goddesses](#) helps you to recognize certain patterns in your own life. May they offer you insights about what underlying forces have driven you so far.

