

UNDERSTANDING THE FOUR PRIMARY ARCHETYPES AND HOW THEY OPERATE IN OUR LIVES

Reprint of an interview with Mary Ovenstone
Printed in Odyssey Magazine

Mary Ovenstone is a therapist and counselor who has pursued her special interest in working with archetypes and the shadow, in keeping with current Jungian thought. In her individual counseling and workshops she helps people to understand how to work with the shadow and to balance these archetypes in their own lives.

In her shadow-work training, she studied the work of Robert Moore, a Jungian analyst and professor of theology, who is regarded as the 'guru' of the men's movement in the USA and around the world. Robert Bly, a leading figure in the founding of the men's movement, looked to Jungians Robert Moore and James Hillman for his primary inspiration.

An archetype is an energy pattern or a motif that is contained in the unconscious and is part of the experience of all mankind. There are archetypes that are present and inherent in each one of us. Some are specific to certain individuals, and others are universal.

For instance, there is an archetype of Marriage, which is part of an old paradigm, or pattern, of relationship between two people. Today this particular relationship archetype is beginning to fade, and a new kind of pattern, the archetype of Partnership, is beginning to enter in. We are living now in a time of changing paradigms, in which new archetypes are emerging, and one of these is that of Partnership. How this new archetype will fill out in the human psyche we do not yet know. But, as more and more people have that experience, it is likely to flesh itself out and become universal.

In Jung's view, human beings have an unboundaried unconscious that is shared with all humankind. Energy can flow from my consciousness into yours, because there is no boundary on this level of universality.

This notion has been worked with in modern theoretical physics, so that we can now talk about M-fields, which are fields that we share. If something in one location in that field moves, it moves throughout the whole field. This is something all shamanic people have long understood, and now it is being incorporated into the realm of physics.

We also have an unboundaried super-conscious, which is the part of us that relates to spirit and the invisible. So we are unboundaried on both the super-conscious as well as the unconscious level. Contained within that are the boundaries of what makes you unique. That is, your conscious mind and your own subconscious mind.

The four archetypes I am going to discuss are universal archetypes that everybody has contained within their own psyche. As I begin to describe them, you will be able to relate to them. These are the four fundamental archetypes, which encompass all the others.

These archetypes may constellate. That is, they may rise into ascendancy, and then recede. When a particular archetype rises into ascendancy, then the energy of that archetype is strongly and profoundly with you. Robert Moore talks about these archetypes as if they had a life of their own. Not only do they have the power that we give to them, but they have a universal power.

THE KING/QUEEN ARCHETYPE

The King and the Queen are masculine and feminine versions of the same archetype. All archetypes have both a masculine and feminine aspect to them. I found that Robert Moore's work was all to do with the masculine, as the shadow-work training that I did had emerged out of the men's movement. Working with the shadows of these archetypes, I found that they were quite different in the feminine. So I have done quite a lot of work and research bringing in the feminine aspect. As I go through them, I'm going to give both his (masculine) and my (feminine) understanding of each of them.

The characteristics of the King/Queen archetype are similar. The prime aspect is that this is the sovereign energy of the psyche. It is the part of us that is the ruler of our own realm, our own world.

The King/Queen archetype is the first and the last to constellate. When we are born, the immaculate archetype is the Divine Child, the 'Golden Child', as it is called. When you look at a baby you can recognize that divine element with which each child is born.

As the child grows and develops, this archetype mutates and turns into the adult King/Queen; and ultimately the last thing to constellate in the human is the higher self, or the transpersonal aspect of the King/Queen. When that constellates, the realm becomes a much larger realm, embracing the transpersonal.

One of the other archetypes that is contained within the King/Queen is the Mother/Father archetype. The King and the Queen are also the Mother and the Father, the life-giving aspect. It includes the sense of fertility, and the initiating of all cycles of manifestation. Everything that is made manifest in our lives is initiated by the Queen or King in us, and moves out into our creative field.

Another element of the King or Queen is the 'ordering of the realm'. The idea of 'ordering' relates to choosing what will or will not be in your realm. This implies no judgment on what you do not choose to have in your realm; for everything has its place and purpose, and everything is part of God's realm.

Your shadow is that which you are not in touch with in yourself, that which you choose to keep hidden, or not to address in yourself. The feelings that you want to deny in yourself go into your shadow. And as you walk forward, presenting yourself to the world, your shadow follows you. Everybody else can see the shadow trailing behind you, except yourself. You can't see it because, as soon as you turn around to look at it, the shadow moves with you.

In the way I present myself to the world, I may be expressing an archetype with clarity. But if there's an aspect of that that I'm ashamed of, or that I've made a choice not to express; or if there's something in that archetype that so possesses me that it's always up for me, then I'm going to cast a shadow. Either I will have too much of that archetype or too little. When we do shadow-work, we address those aspects of ourselves where there's either too much or too little of that kind of energy. There can be a lot of good material in the shadow: it's not only 'bad' stuff. If, for instance, your Queen goes into shadow, and you don't have enough Queen, that's the best part of you that needs to be retrieved and brought to the fore.

Other aspects of the King/Queen are the reasonable, rational parts of ourselves; integrity, stability, purposefulness. When the higher self is known, there is a much larger realm that emerges, and a sense of high purpose. Part of this archetype is the nurturer, the steward, the husbandman.

The King/Queen bestows blessing. The Queen in me bestows a blessing by acknowledging the Queen in you. That is the true nature of blessing, not the notion of being above others and bestowing blessings down to the masses. King Arthur, the archetypal king, sat at the Round Table with all his knights and, when he bestowed a blessing, it was the King in him acknowledging everyone else.

As Kings and Queens, we mirror other people. We hold up the mirror to them and say, 'I see the beauty in you - and I see the warts as well. Here's the mirror: I hold it up to you.' The opposite of this is the narcissist, who needs to be mirrored all the time. Narcissists look out there and see only reflections of themselves. They are continually concerned with 'How am I doing? Am I doing a good job? What do you think of me?' Because they have no sense of self, no inner core of King or Queen, they need to keep having somebody mirror back to them who they are all the time. But when the King and Queen is constellated in you, you hold up the mirror to others and say, 'I see you. I acknowledge you. I can be with you. I see the things that are not so great about you, but that's okay. I hold the mirror up to you and I acknowledge the beauty that is present in you.'

Each of the four archetypes has a healing aspect. For the King and Queen it is to make whole. Your King/Queen surrounds the other person with your energy field. If people are hurt - physically, mentally or emotionally - their energy field is impaired in some way. You can then offer them the assistance of your energy field, so that they are contained within that while they heal. A mother naturally holds the child in her arms until the child regains a sense of equilibrium and goes out into the world again.

This does not mean taking responsibility for the other person - that is rescuing, trying to make yourself better. You can't make others better, but you can lend them your energy field so that they can make themselves better in your midst.

Another characteristic of the good King or Queen is minimizing punishment and maximizing praise. That's the parental responsibility.

One of the shadows of the King/Queen archetype is the Tyrant - the one who takes responsibility for everyone in his/her realm and runs their lives for them, decreeing how they should live their lives and exercising power over them.

The opposite of that is the Weakling - the passive, narcissistic one, who has no sense of self, no inner core at all, and is completely dependent on other people's mirroring of him/her. The Weakling can't take responsibility or initiative of any sort, is helpless, passive, a victim. The young Weakling Prince or Princess grows up into the Weakling shadow of the King/Queen.

The young, immature, clear archetype of the King/Queen is the Golden Child, and its immature shadow is the High Chair Tyrant, the child whose parents put him up on a pedestal and he sits there in his high chair and rules the roost. He learns how to snap his fingers while mom and dad run around and he gets everything that he wants. This child later turns into the Tyrant, who is arrogant and has grandiose ideas of his own importance.

THE WARRIOR/WARRIORESS

The first characteristic of the Warrior is the ability to maintain the boundaries around the self, or the realm. This does not mean maintaining the defenses, but the boundaries.

If you have been wounded in your childhood, you develop defenses. These are ways of shutting down your feelings to prevent further hurt; ways of guarding yourself from making mistakes. So you keep yourself safe, but in immature ways. What we end up doing is shutting ourselves down altogether to protect ourselves. We crunch down on our souls, so that we can't love and we can't feel love. To the degree that we are defended, to that degree we are incapable of feeling or expressing love. So, when we are defended, even the good stuff goes out the window.

What needs to happen here is the establishment of boundaries. I describe the boundaries as being like the permeable membranes of a cell wall, through which the nutrients are allowed to come into the cell, but the poisons are kept out. We need to have active, conscious boundaries that we can activate at will. So if something is going to enter in that does not belong in our realm, we are able to create the boundaries that say: 'This does not belong in here. But that does, so come on in.'

The Warrior, then, is the aspect of ourselves that maintains the boundaries around our realm.

It is the task of the Warrior to enact the will of the King or Queen. The Warrior is the drive in us that ensures the purpose of the King/Queen is achieved. This is the part of us that is loyal and devoted to the cause, whatever the cause may be. This is the assertive, aggressive part of us that goes out to achieve whatever needs to be achieved. There is a wonderful healthy aggressiveness to the Warrior archetype, which does not mean that it wields power over others. It just goes out and achieves what needs to be achieved.

This aspect of ourselves is not generally accepted in women, and has very much been put into shadow in womankind, because we don't like to see women being aggressive, we don't like to see them going out and achieving things. In the business world, if a woman is assertive and says, 'It will be this way, and we will do it this way' she may be called a bitch; whereas if a man says the same thing, he is admired as a leader. This is something that women in the business realm are having to work with all the time. You get nothing achieved whatsoever if you don't get assertive and aggressive and state what must be done; but, if you do that, you run the risk of putting up the backs of people who are threatened by that.

While some people draw a distinction between aggression and assertion, I am consciously equating the two terms here, because I really want to honour this aspect in ourselves, which has often been regarded as a shadow quality. Aggression is not always a shadow quality, though it certainly can border on it.

The Warrior aspect of ourselves is both focused and emotionally disengaged. When you are in your Warrior, you are simply determined to get the job done. You are defending the boundaries of your realm in a way that requires that you 'just do it'. This is the opposite of the Lover archetype, in which the emotions are always involved. But if you always remain in your Warrior aspect, disengaged from your feelings, then you're squelching any opportunity for the Lover archetype to be present in yourself. So that's why it's important not to have too much Warrior, and to have a good balance with the Lover.

The Warrior always engages in life, is actively present, and never withdraws. It is the part of us that is controlled, self-disciplined and achieving. The soldier and the athlete are two perfect

examples of the Warrior. It is seen in the person who will go out and exercise until he is strong enough to achieve his purpose. There is that determination and willingness to suffer the discomfort and pain of what he has to do in order to achieve something.

The feminine aspect of this, which I think is really interesting, is the ability to wean. This relates to both men and women, but one sees it primarily in the feminine. The Warrior has the ability to wean the offspring, to cut off the nurturing when it is necessary, to cut ties. If we can initiate cycles and give birth to things, we also have to be able to say, 'It is done, finished. This is the end of this cycle, and it's okay to dissociate myself from this cycle.' At the end of a relationship we need to be able to say, 'It is over. I dissociate myself from it. I am no longer in this relationship. This is now outside of my realm.'

Women can be extraordinarily good at this. When the Warriress aspect of a woman is present, ending a relationship is something she does exceedingly well. It is often more difficult for men to do this. But if your Warrior is in shadow, doing this is not easy; and then it is also difficult to wean your children.

The Warrior has the ability to say, 'No', and to bring death to a cycle or situation. In India the goddess of death and destruction is Kali, who slashes and kills with her sword. It's important to recognize that this Destroyer aspect of the Warrior is sacred. For from death comes new birth and new life.

When there is devotion to the greater, transpersonal cause, then we have the higher aspect of the Warrior, the one who will protect the higher realm.

The doorway to the Warrior archetype is through anger. We often repress anger, because it is scary. What happens then is that the anger goes down into the subconscious, where it ferments, twists and turns. A new trigger comes along, and it all comes rushing up as rage, blasting out, hurting, maiming and destroying. Rage is often equated with anger, but they are different.

Anger (not rage) can be an appropriate response to a situation; but you need to learn how to do anger so that it ignites the Warrior and brings a sense of power and empowerment to yourself, rather than either stuffing it down and repressing it as rage, or reacting to the first flush of anger and misusing it. This kind of unfocused anger is a very heavy energetic. However, allowing anger to open up the doorway to the Warrior archetype can be very empowering.

A martial artist, for instance, goes beyond anger, and learns how to trigger the Warrior directly. I know from my own experience that I can go into my Warrior at will, and I don't have to be triggered by anger to do that. But how I initially learned to do it was through anger and the right use of the energy of anger. Then you can transcend the anger emotion and go straight into empowerment.

The shadow of the Warrior shows up in the perpetrator, the cruel masochist, and, at its opposite pole, the victim and the coward. The victim is the disempowered person, who has never learned how to assume the adult stand of the powerful Warrior.

You don't have to be a victim. You are the sovereign King and the Warrior in your life: it's a matter of taking back the power.

THE LOVER

The Lover in us is the aspect of ourselves that is emotional, intuitive, sexual and sensual.

In the feminine, the Lover part of ourselves is seductive, magnetic, attractive; in the masculine, the Lover is the pursuer, is charismatic and exudes sexuality. The masculine Lover gives out energy, while the feminine Lover draws it in. Of course, we have both aspects in us, but may be predominantly one or the other. The Lover in us is our appetite for life, our libido, all of our sensual hungers, including our desire for beauty, our longing to touch and be touched, our playfulness, liveliness, feelings of passion and compassion, pleasure and pain.

The Lover archetype is oceanic by nature; that is, it is naturally unboundaried. Left to its own devices, this aspect of ourselves will love and will feel sexual towards all of the opposite sex; it will love everyone indiscriminately.

If the Lover is constellated in the midst of a healthy sense of self, then there is the ability to discriminate and to order what belongs within your realm and what doesn't and you will have the Warrior to create and maintain the boundaries. Another aspect of boundaries is commitment - the commitment to another person. Commitment is not in the Lover archetype, but is in the Warrior. The Queen in me commits, through my Warrior, to being with one person. Then a boundary is put around the Lover in myself. But, by nature, the Lover is oceanic. There is nothing wrong with loving everyone or feeling attracted to many others; what matters is how you act it out and whether it is good for the realm or not.

The indiscriminate Lover needs to be given boundaries by the Warrior. In its highest expression, the Lover is the lover of all life. It is open to the collective unconscious and it intuits oneness. This is the aspect of the artist or the psychic.

The Lover has several shadows. The too-sexual Lover is the addictive nymphomaniac or Don Juan. This is the indiscriminate Lover who uses sex for pleasure and is unboundaried. The opposite of this is the Whore, where there is too little sexual energy and sex is used to manipulate another person. Here sex is used, not for enjoyment, but for manipulation. Many wives end up being Whores, because they're using their sexuality as a means of obtaining financial security from their husbands. A man can also be a Whore then he uses his sexuality to get or achieve what he wants out of life.

When there is too much emotion, there you have the Drama Queen/King. Too little emotion, and you have the Stoic. This is the cold, impotent, depressed part of ourselves, where there is not enough emotion.

The young, immature Stoic is the Dreamer, who lives in his head with his dreams. He may even dream about spirituality, but it's all up there in his head and there's no emotion involved whatsoever. Such people may seem to be very spiritual, but beneath the surface it may be very one-dimensional, and devoid of emotion.

THE MAGICIAN/CRONE/MAGUS

This archetype has to do with the understanding of how energy works or flows in any system. It's the ability to work with, or channel, energy or power.

There are many different realms in which energy moves, whether it is the way energy moves through electronic circuitry, or the way it moves through the spiritual, mental, emotion and physical dimensions of the human psyche. A shaman is an archetypal magician, who understands how energy is working on all four levels of the human being.

To the person on the outside of that knowledge, it appears occult (meaning 'hidden') and mysterious. For the Magician has knowledge of things that other people don't understand. A magician can be a scientist, an electronics technician, a psychotherapist - all of whom have been trained in particular fields of knowledge of how energy systems work.

The masculine magician learns through the acquisition of knowledge. The feminine magician uses her intuition, her perception, and her inner eyes and senses to wield her power. To be what I call 'a capital M Magician', you have to have both knowledge and intuition, combining your knowledge with an understanding of how things work on a much deeper level. So 'a small m magician' will employ either knowledge or intuition, while 'a capital M Magician' understands and uses both.

The Magician is focused on the conscious mind, but it goes way beyond that. The Magician employs the conscious mind (logic and reason); the subconscious mind (or intuition), and the super-conscious mind (or perception and spiritual awareness). So the true Magician uses all the realms of the mind, in order to understand fully how something works in a particular field.

As a feminine Magician becomes older, she is called a Crone, and she becomes more clear and direct in speaking her truth, saying it as she sees it. Interestingly, as the masculine Magician ages, he becomes more silent. It is as if each is becoming more androgynous and incorporating more of the opposite polarity in the expression of their wholeness.

Another aspect of this archetype is the creation and placement of objects, so that energy can flow through that arrangement of objects - whether it is for use in ceremonies, a flower arrangement, or feng shui. Feng shui is the Oriental art of the placement of objects, shifting the way energy flows through a home or workplace.

The Magician aspect also has the ability to synthesize, to take things from different realms and spaces, and bring them all together in one cohesive whole - and to articulate that. It is the ability to form connections and to see those connections; to use symbols; to see alignment; and to create internal and external alignment; and the ability to perform ceremony and ritual. This is the Priest in all of us, and the Keeper of the Cycles of Creation. While we may all initiate cycles, it is the Magician that understands these cycles and works consciously with their energies.

The Magician may be seen in the priest or priestess, the seer or the prophet, the technician, the lawyer, the therapist and psychotherapist, the healer, the doctor, the shaman.

The shadows of this archetype are the Manipulator (the power-shadow, the one who takes the power and manipulates it), or the naïve and innocent one (who has no knowledge or power).

The immature aspect in the young child is the Precocious Child, who wants to see and understand everything and takes it all to pieces, and be in on the adult conversations.

The god that relates to the Magician archetype is Hermes, god of alchemy; and the goddess is Sophia, goddess of wisdom.

These four archetypes all fit together. Each of us needs to have and express each one, in a balanced way. Too much of one, and too little of another, and there will be an imbalance. Then the shadows take over, and you begin to act out of the shadow, instead of acting out the truth of who you are.

When people tell their stories, when they look at what's up for them right now, then they can get an idea of what they need to be working on.

At the same time, there is good reason why the unconscious is called what it is. Because what we're unconscious of we're unconscious of. We don't know what it is. So part of the work is about making it conscious. In my workshops and individual counseling, using a variety of tools, I can help people see more clearly what has been in shadow, what is asking to be initiated, and what the hindrances may be. Depending on what's up for them, I can create ways of making their unconscious material conscious, and activate in them the energies that are lacking, so that these imbalances can be addressed.