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The Crone Archetype:

Women Reclaim Their Authentic Self by Resonating with Crone Images

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Master of Arts in Holistic Health Studies

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May 2011

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to describe the lived experience of women who resonate or activate crone archetypal images. The literature describes the crone archetype as a pre-existent form in the collective unconscious that embodies instinctive ways of channeling wisdom, inner knowing, and intuition, guiding us through the transition of life, and going inward to bring forth the light for transformation. When women resonate or activate the crone archetypal image they tap into the psyche, to reclaim primordial images and receive the power within them that honor older women. Seven in-depth interviews were completed with older women who described their experiences of resonating with crone archetypal images. In order to reflect the psycho-spiritual nature of this research, the method utilized was organic inquiry. To ensure this research reflected the women's perspective about their experiences and in their voice, critical feminist ethnographic principles were employed. The results of the interviews demonstrated that when the women resonated with their images, they embodied the dynamic forms of the crone archetype explained in the literature. However, most significant was the finding that the women affirmed their authentic self and trusted their inner feminine way of knowing. The implications of this research suggest that when women resonate or activate crone archetypal images that honor older women, they find a positive sense of self and purpose that ultimately can benefit society and integrate them into the culture as they transition through aging.

Acknowledgments

To Marit Solheim-Witt for her editing gifts

&

Dedication

I dedicate this research to the crone women interviewed, with much gratitude for their

heartfelt and powerful stories of resonating with their crone images.

Se Deusa quiser - Ela vai aparecer – Então chama ela!

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Introduction

What does it mean to be an elder in this culture?
What are my new responsibilities?
What has to be let go to make room for the transformations of energy that
are ready to pour through the body-soul?
- Marion Woodman (as cited in Bolen, 2001, p.2)

Marion Woodman's probing questions calls upon us to reflect on the experience of older women in our culture; how they are perceived and whether their experiences are purposeful and affirming. They enter retirement searching for a new role to weave in with the identity of their past. How older women will transition through the latter stage of aging is greatly influenced by the beliefs and values that the culture constructs about elderly in society (Cruickshank, 2003). Marion Woodman beckons older women to contemplate what is necessary for them to transition through aging and what form of transformation is necessary to bring purpose and meaning to their lives. The crone archetype is an invitation for older women to go inward to bring forth creativity, to assist them with this transition holistically, and to trust their inner wisdom (Walker 1985, 1996).

This section gives a summary of the entire research process. The first chapter is the literature review and contains pertinent research regarding older women and the crone archetype. The literature review begins by defining the crone archetypal image. The crone archetypal image represents wisdom and inner ways of knowing, guidance through transitions of the life cycle that are also represented in nature, and the transformation from going inward to bringing forth the renewal (Bolen, 2001; Estés, 1992; Ray, 2004; Walker, 1985, 1996). Women can utilize archetypal images of old wise woman, the crone archetype, and uncover meaning for their life experiences, to prepare for

transitioning into their latter stage of life (Bolen, 1994; 2001; Kolbenschlag, 1996, 2006; Ray, 2004; Walker, 1985). In the field of gerontology, feminists argue that the concept of aging is "socially constructed" based upon society's beliefs and values (Cruikshank, 2003; Thomason, 2006; Woodward, 2003). The literature finds that women who are older are more influenced by how society defines aging over physical health or economic issues (Cruikshank, 2003; Holstein & Minkler, 2003; Thomason, 2006; Woodward, 2003). Gerontologists argue that negative societal perceptions are internalized by women, which then harmfully affect their health (Cruikshank, 2003; Holstein, 2001; Holstein & Minkler, 2003; Thomason, 2006). Many of the myths about older women have been altered to promote a desired cultural norm of women and do not represent the lived experience of these women (Bolen, 2001; Estés, 1992; Walker, 1985, 1996). These myths have been either sanitized or changed so that they effectively suppress the crone archetype and do not reflect the primordial nature of the archetype represented in the psyche until awakened (Bolen, 2001; Estés, 1992; Ress, 2006). The archetype is a way of channeling the crone instinct and to "activate" it is to tap into an energy field-like transformer that creates a relationship of becoming a crone (Bolen, 2001; Ulanov, 1971; Kolbenschlag, 1996). The literature defines "activating" the crone archetype, but does not sufficiently describe the lived experiences of older women who "activate" the crone archetypal image.

The next chapter is the lenses chapter that explains the important theoretical grounds for this research, my professional experiences that have influenced me in selecting this research topic, and my personal experiences that affect how I have approached this research process. There are several theories that create a framework for

this research. The archetypes and mythology provide insights into the human experience (Campbell, 2008; Jung, 1968). The feminist views of theologian Ivone Gebara are significant to my theoretical lenses. Paulo Freire's (2003) critical pedagogy acknowledges that humans inherently carry knowledge and from this basis create new learning. Gerbara (2002) empowers women, through critical pedagogy, to reclaim myths that honor them and unleash themselves from internalized inferiority based on ingrained societal beliefs and values. The concept of the crone is a metaphor for going inward that is represented by the connection and balance of the earth (Macy & Brown, 1998; Swimme & Berry, 1992). Negative myths that are internalized by older women affect their well-being. Scientific discoveries in psychoneuroimmunology demonstrate that negative perceptions, thoughts, and emotions can influence wellness and lead to illness (Pert, 1997). One theory that may explain the mechanics of these connections is Rupert Sheldrake's (1981, 2005) theory of morphic resonance. The final part of the lenses chapter covers my professional and personal perspectives that consist of my own experiences that have influenced the selection of this research topic, the research design, and the data analysis of this research.

The method chapter explains the methodology appropriate for the research purpose. To describe the lived experience of older women who resonate with crone archetypal images, I have utilized the tool of excavation which is defined as uncovering what already exists underneath (DeVault, 1999). To explain the rationale for the culture of inquiry selected for this research, I have used the metaphor of a three-pronged fork. The first prong represents the process of excavating to a deeper layer, from phenomenology, to an ethnographic slant to organic inquiry. The second prong addresses the feminist

critique of phenomenology that takes into consideration research that is done to reflect

the actual lived experiences of women and in their voice (DeVault, 1999; Fisher, 2000;

Hesse-Biber, 2007). The third prong describes the key feminist ethnographic principles

that are utilized in this research. Finally, the three-pronged fork itself vibrates and

reverberates similar to a tuning fork, symbolizing that the organic inquiry philosophy

effects the entire research process (Clements, 2002, 2004; Clements, Ettling, Jenett, &

Shields, 1998a, 1998b; Curry & Wells, 2006). In order to uncover the lived experience

of women, the best tool to answer the research question was in-depth interviews

(DeVault, 1999; Hess-Biber, 2007).

The next section of this research is the results chapter. This chapter records the

results of the seven older women interviewed and summary reflections of the women's

descriptions of how they resonate with their crone archetypal images. Specific

observations are noted here, including logistics about the interview process.

The final section of this research is the discussion chapter. This chapter discusses

the results of the interviews and uncovers four common threads that are linked to the

literature. These threads are: (a) honoring the authentic self, (b) denial of the sacred

feminine that has led to demonizing older women, (c) the crone as a metaphor for

transformation, (d) and the crone as a metaphor for transitioning through the cycle of life.

Implications for holistic health are discussed in terms of how the crone archetypal image

can assist older women to transition holistically into their later years, as well as how the

crone itself is an invitation to go inward to bring forth transformation. The implication of

this research for the earth community is the concept of the crone as a metaphor for the

relationship of humans with the earth. From the crones perspective this relationship calls

upon us to bring about balance and to honor the earth, because it is essential for the earth's survival.

Socially constructed negative myths or derogatory images of older women, such as hag, are internalized by women and adversely impact their well-being. The critical issue that surfaces in this context is the need to honor and recognize older women as they age in culture. A compelling case is presented that older women can be empowered by resonating with the crone archetype; however there is little evidence of the lived experience of this in the literature. The purpose of this research is to describe the lived experience of older women who "activate" or resonate with the crone archetype.

Literature Review

This chapter reviews pertinent research regarding older women and the crone archetype. The first part describes how the crone archetypal image is defined in the literature. The next section describes the gifts of mythology and the archetypal forms. The third section gathers research from the field of gerontology that specifically addresses aging issues for older women. The review includes a few models from the field of gerontology that the literature presents and critiques these models in relation to women's issues. The next section of the literature demonstrates research that suggests the importance of deconstructing harmful myths that older women internalize. The final review of the literature touches on the process of "activating" the crone archetype and what this might mean for older women. In concluding the literature review, a research purpose is presented.

The Crone Archetypal Image

> The Crone – the ancient holy one. She holds the power of age and time, of retribution, and of transformation…
> Ancient, though not always aged, she may be beautiful, but she's not pretty.
>   Ellen Lorenzi-Prince (as cited in Thomason, 2006, p. vii)

Succinctly stated, this quote from Ellen Lorenzi-Prince describes the essence of the crone. The crone image represents wisdom, inner knowing, and intuition (Bolen, 2001; Estés, 1992; Walker, 1985, 1996). The crone uses her wisdom as transformative justice (Bolen, 2001; Mookerjee, 2008; Walker, 1985, 1996). The crone helps us through transitions, drawing us inward during difficult times and bringing meaning to the shadow side of us that dies and comes to life again (Bolen, 2001; Mookerjee, 2008; Walker, 1985, 1996). The crone symbolizes the cycle of life (birth-life-death) that is present in

the human experience and in all creation (Bolen, 2001; Gomberg, 2001; Walker, 1985, 1996). As an archetype, the crone is a universal image that has existed throughout time and across cultures, and is visible in mythology and stories (Bolen, 2001; Walker, 1985, 1996).

The literature demonstrates many different images in mythology and stories that encompass one or more of the characteristic forms represented by the crone archetype. I have extracted only a few examples of each crone image that commonly depicts a particular characteristic form of the crone in the literature. However, it should be emphasized that there can be numerous images that reflect the crone archetype, containing one or more of her characteristic forms. From this basis, upon defining and reviewing various crone images in the literature, one will have a clearer understanding of the crone's essence that Ellen Lorenzi-Prince describes in her quote.

The crone defined in the literature. A good place to begin in the literature is to review how Carl Jung, who created the theory of archetypes, defines the wisdom archetype. While not defining the crone per se, he describes the wise old man as an archetype that possesses having the psychic personification of inner wisdom or mysticism (Hopcke, 1989). According to Hopcke (1989), Jung saw this archetypal image in such figures as the wizard, the magician, the counselor or guide, the old man in the forest, and the truth seeker (Hopcke, 1989). Hopcke (1989) makes the point that there is a resemblance to Jung's study of the old wise man archetype phenomena to Jung's obsession with the concepts of alchemy and rebirth, which both have transformational meaning.

Today, Faber and Mayer (2009) synthesize various definitions of the wisdom archetype, including that of Jung. They define this as: "Sage – represented by a valuing of enlightenment and knowledge; truth and understanding. This is the expert and the counselor, possessing wisdom and acumen, perhaps a bit pretentious. Scholarly, philosophical, intelligent, [and] a mystical and prestigious guide in the world" (Faber & Mayer, 2009, p. 309). While this definition of the "sage" has no gender bias, some of the characteristics, such as scholarly, intelligent, possessing acumen, implies that wisdom comes from a way of knowing that is different than the intuitive knowledge of the crone (Bolen, 2001; Walker, 1985). The literature demonstrates some biological differences between men and women, whereby men typically access left-brain functions (rational reasoning, logic) and women tend to access right-brain functions (insight, feelings, creativity, relatedness) (Brizendine, 2006; Northrup, 1996). Women's thinking, thought processes, and ways of knowing are generally different than that of men (Brizendine, 2006; Northrup, 1996). Based on Northrup's (1996) argument regarding biological differences, the sage defined by Faber and Mayer's research (2009) appears to be anchored more towards identifying with male characteristics.

The crone image has existed in mythology and story since ancient times and across cultures, and therefore is an archetype in and of itself (Bolen, 2001; Estés, 1992; Walker, 1985; 1996). Barbara Walker (1996), in her book *The Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* compiled research about various crone images found in myths from a historical perspective. According to her research, the feminine wisdom found in the crone became the image of the Goddess of Wisdom (Walker, 1996). In ancient times, the Mensa symbolized the lunar "wise blood" and it was believed that women entering the

third stage of life (post-menopausal) kept their wisdom within (Walker, 1996). The

Mensa was considered the source of women's wisdom (Ulanov, 1971; Walker, 1985).

Rather than symbolizing a curse, the Mensa represented for women a "gathering of her

energy and feelings to a deeper center below the threshold of consciousness… a time of

developing fertile insights" (Ulanov, 1971, p. 176). Some examples of images of this

archetype are Sophia, Metis, or Medusa (Walker, 1996).

 The crone has been historically considered the third figure of the Triple Goddess, or

trinity, which includes the maiden and mother (Walker, 1996). Walker (1996) also

defines the crone as representative of "inevitable destruction or dissolution that must

precede regeneration" (p. 187), which is found in the images of Kali the destroyer,

Cerridwen the death–dealing sow, Queen of the Underworld, or Persephone the

destroyer. The underworld is a metaphor that represents the collective unconscious and

going inward (Bolen, 2001). Crone, the word itself, is believed to come from Rhea

Kronia, signifying Mother of Time, and is connected to black creatures, such as the crow,

which is sacred and related to death (Walker, 1996).

 The crone is also synonymous with the hag image (Bolen, 2001; Walker, 1985;

1996). Hag is derived from the root word "hagia" which means holy in Greek and once

mirrored high respect for older wise women (Bolen, 2001). "In Greek she became

Hecate, the Crone or Hag as queen of the dead, incarnate on earth in a series of wise-

women or high priestesses" (Walker, 1996, p. 366). The term "hagiology" still refers to

the study of holy matters or of saints, however the word hag no longer carries the same

meaning as "Holy Woman" as originally intended (Walker, 1996).

There are many images of the crone archetype and they are generally described in the literature in terms of one or more key characteristics that define the crone. "Like all other archetypes, the crone is a universal symbol that represents specific ways of being and knowing" (Ray, 2004, p. 110). To be a crone is symbolic of a process or form, not just simply personality characteristics that define the crone (Cruikshank, 2003; Walker, 1985; Ray, 2004). Furthermore, the crone is not just for aging persons and can be tapped into throughout one's life (Bolen, 2001; Estés, 1992; Myss, 2003; Ray, 2004).

Each of the crone images that capture one or more of the characteristic forms connects us to the crone archetype through our life experiences. The following sections demonstrate some examples in the literature of the different characteristic forms.

The crone calling upon inner wisdom. There is no doubt that through age wisdom is accumulated from experience and gathered knowledge (Woodward, 2003). In Bolen's (2001) book, *Goddesses in Older Women: Archetypes in Women over Fifty*, she demonstrates that wisdom comes in many forms that are represented by different archetypal images. Wisdom that represents what is amassed throughout life, Bolen refers to as practical wisdom, which can be in the form of spiritual insights or in the form of intuitive knowing (Bolen, 2001). Each represents a different form of wisdom or way of knowing, which are incarnated in different archetypal images (Bolen, 2001).

Practical wisdom, such as mastering a skill, and accumulated intelligence, in the form of wise counsel, are represented by the image of Metis, from Greek Mythology (Bolen, 2001). Walker describes the myth of Metis:

> Mythical mother of Athene, assimilated to the Zeus cult by the claim that Zeus impregnated her, then swallowed her, so her wisdom-principle became part of himself. Thus he was able to give birth to Metis's child Athene from his own head. (Walker, 1996, p. 653)

Metis wisdom is the accumulated experience or skill that has been learned over time that

can be draw upon at a later stage of life. "When you cease to look to experts for authority

and trust your own expertise, you find your own *Metis*" (Bolen, 2001, p. 23).

Sophia is the image of feminine wisdom and spiritual insight. In the Bible, the

Book of Wisdom is commonly referred to as Sophia, and represents spiritual knowing or

soul knowledge (Bolen, 2001; Ulanov, 1971). According to Walker, Saint Sophia is the

"canonical adaptation of the Gnostic Great Mother: Latin Greek Sophia, the spirit of

Female Wisdom…Symbolized by the dove…Sophia once represented God's female soul,

source of his power" (1996, p. 951). Bolen (2001) views the first stage of life (the maiden

stage) and the second (the mother/matron) stage of life for women as both generally

focused on acquiring knowledge and experience, then in the third stage (crone), women

seek meaning to life and spiritual significance. In this stage Sophia wisdom guides us

towards spiritual transformation (Bolen, 2001; Madigan, 1998).

Sophia wisdom can also be represented by mystic figures with historical basis, such

as the Christian saints or deities from other religious affinities, which were considered

visionaries that tap into their inner spiritual wisdom (Madigan, 1998). One example of a

Christian mystic is Hildegard of Bingen, who was a Benedictine abbess, as well as a

scientist, herbalist, composer, philosopher, and ecological activist (Madigan, 1998). She

is viewed as embodying the ancient archetypal feminine through her scholarly work

(Bolen, 2011; Kolbenschlag, 1996). Bolen (2001) describes Bingen as a choicemaker

crone, who commanded great respect from her peers, despite her defiance to authority.

Hildegard of Bingen was able to pursue issues of her conviction that gave her deep

spiritual meaning (Bolen, 2001).

Wisdom can also come from inner knowledge that is passed down from our ancestors. This is intuitive wisdom that can be tapped into throughout our life, not just at old age. Estés (1992) uses storytelling to demonstrate the importance of women handing down the power of intuition from one generation to the next and to trusting this way of knowing. Estés (1992) recounts the story of Vasalisa and Baba Yaga, from eastern Europe, about a mother who, before she dies gives her daughter, Vasalisa, a doll. Vasalisa is later cast out by her stepsisters to fetch fire for the hearth and then searches out her grandmother, Baba Yaga, deep in the woods, who through trial and error, teachers Vasalisa about the power of her own inner wisdom and to how to retrieve her intuition and trust it. The Baba Yaga represents the wise-women responsible for handing down the gift of intuition (Estés, 1992). Vasalisa learns from Baba Yaga to trust and use her intuition and is reminded of this by her doll that symbolizes the instinctual nature (Estés, 1992).

Another image of the crone who is comfortable with her inner knowing is Hestia. Bolen (2001) states that Hestia is the archetypal image that symbolizes the center of the psyche or Self. Hestia represents a spiritual soul that is comfortable with herself and is not influenced by the ego or pleasing others, nor are others the center of her life anymore, such as with motherhood (Bolen, 2001). In Greek mythology she is considered a virgin, which is interpreted as not being dependent upon others in defining her self (Bolen, 2001; Harding, 1971; Walker, 1996). She acts according to where she finds her value, not in relation to her father, lover, spouse, or child (Bolen, 2001; Harding, 1971; Walker, 1996).

Crone as transformative wrath – wise anger. Once women reach the third stage of life it is expected that they are wise old women who do not express anger, even if it is directed at injustice and their disempowerment (Bolen, 1994, 2001; Woodward, 2003). Bolen states "the depression and anxiety that women suffer from in the first and second phases of their lives are usually the result of feeling angry and powerless, afraid to express it because of the consequences, either real or imagined, and bottling it up so well that it is no longer recognizable as anger" (2001, p. 78). Anger in the third stage of life is an appropriate emotion that can release build up tensions, of which is no longer inhibited by cultural influences (Bolen, 2001; Woodward, 2003).

The underlying rage that is bubbling is the transformative wrath of the archetypal image of Kali-ma from India (Bolen, 2001; Mookerjee, 2008). Kali-ma symbolizes the destructive forces and how they can be transformed in the end (Bolen, 2001; Mookerjee, 2008; Walker, 1985). "She is the power that creates and destroys, the womb from which all things proceed and to which all return" (Mookerjee, 2008, p. 22). Walker (1985) describes Kali-ma in her book *The Crone: Woman of Age, Wisdom, and Power* as:

> She was both ugly and beautiful, Virgin and Crone, darkness and light,
> winter and summer, birth giver and death bringer. She was a truer image
> of the real world's variety and cyclic alternation than any of the images
> developed by patriarchy alone. (p. 72)

Kali-ma represents wrath, but she also represents birth, life, and transformative death –all parts of the cycle are sacred (Walker, 1985, 1996). The Baba Yaga also symbolizes the phase of life necessary for transformation, which forces us to go inward to the dark side of our soul, to see what our shadow side will reveal to us, and then to be enlightened from this perspective that transforms us renewed (Estés, 1992). Kali-ma is an archetypal image that unleashes repressed anger, which maintains a healthy tension of the opposites

of wrath and wisdom (Bolen, 2001). "Kali stood for *existence*, which meant *becoming* because all her world was an eternal living flux from which all things rose and disappeared again, in endless cycles" (Walker, 1996, p. 489). Her immense power and independence, especially in not belonging to any man, is symbolized by her virginity status (Mookerjee, 2008).

      Crone as a threefold form – cycle of life. Ancient culture viewed the maiden-mother-crone archetypal images (also referred to as virgin-mother-crone) as the triple goddess in one, or trinity (Bolen, 2001; Gomberg, 2001; Ray, 2004; Walker, 1985). This thrinity is manifested in many ways through: the stages of development (youth, maturity, later life); the phases of the moon (waxing, full, waning); the sections of the cosmos (heaven, earth, underworld); the process of nature (growth, dormant, re-growth); and the transformational sequence of birth, death, and rebirth (Bolen, 2001; Gomberg, 2001; Ray, 2004; Walker, 1985). There are many variations of images in mythology that represent the maiden–mother–crone archetype and their roles are sometimes interchanged, reflecting the transformative nature of the triple goddess in one (Walker, 1996). The Kali-ma has represented the trinity for nearly ten millennia (Walker, 1996).

      The maiden-mother-crone archetype is represented in the Greek myth of Persephone-Demeter-Hecate (Bolen, 2001; Thomason, 2006). The *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Boer, 1979), describes the daughter of Demeter, Persephone, being abducted and pulled to the underworld (Bolen, 2001; Thomason, 2006). Upon her disappearance, Demeter agonizes over the whereabouts of her daughter. It is Hecate, the crone, who hears the screams and tells Demeter that her daughter has been abducted, although she did not see what happened (Bolen, 2001; Thomason, 2006). Hecate helps Demeter seek

out the truth about what happened to Persephone (Bolen, 2001). Later, upon

Persephone's return from the underworld to her mother Demeter, Hecate is present to

greet her (Bolen, 2001). At this juncture of the story, a cryptic line in the Hymn states

"and from that day on that lady precedes and follows Persephone" (Boer, 1979, p. 129).

Bolen (2001) interprets this cryptic line to refer to Hecate as the lady who symbolizes,

through Persephone, a newly acquired consciousness from the underworld that now

accompanies her going forward. The return from the underworld represents the

unconscious, going within to our shadow side that subsequently returns us to the light for

renewal and transformation (Bolen, 2001; Thomason, 2006).

Bolen (2001) sees Demeter as representing the transformation from maiden to

mother and then to crone that coincides with menopause. Walker (1996) expands this

definition:

> In Greek *meter* is "mother". *De* is the delta, or triangle…Demeter was
> what Asia called "the Doorway of the Mysterious Feminine… the root
> from which Heaven and Earth sprang"…Doorways generally were sacred
> to women…represented the womb of the Goddess from which rebirth
> might come.
>
> Persephone held the keys to heaven and hell…[the myth of] Persephone
> told of her descent into the underworld and her annual return to the earth
> each spring. She was really another name for Hecate…who ruled the
> underworld as Destroying Mother Kali…Like Kali the Destroyer, she was
> the basic Death-goddess from the beginning.
> (Walker, 1996, p. 218-219)

Bolen (2001) describes women who are entering menopause, metaphorically are at the

fork in the road, where they are faced with transition or what Bolen terms "Demeter

loss". The fork in the road symbolizes a critical juncture that can either bring bitterness or

great transformation. As an archetypal image, Bolen (2001) identifies the crone-aged

Persephone, the maiden, as a mature aging woman who has already entered the

transformation process (learning from the descent to the underworld) and now has the

capacity of wisdom to share with others.

Bolen (2001) refers to Hecate as the fork in the road, where our psyche is forced to

reflect and accept some impending transition. Hecate is the image of intuitive wisdom or

psychic awareness that has the capacity to integrate multiple perspectives from the past,

present, and future (Bolen, 2001). In Greek mythology, Hecate the crone image is not

considered greatly significant, but rather she is presented as accompanying Demeter, the

mother image, in the triple goddess myth (Bolen, 2001).

> In Greece, Hecate was one of many names for the original feminine
> trinity, ruling heaven, earth, and the underworld…Her image guarded
> three-way crossroads for many centuries…She was especially diabolized
> by Catholic authorities who said the people most dangerous to the faith
> were precisely those whom Hecate patronized: the midwives.
> (Walker, 1996, p. 379)

Hecate is the archetypal image that prepares and transitions towards the final stages of

life.

The metaphoric symbolism in the maiden-mother-crone is archetypal and relates to

the human experience of women in transitioning through life stages (Thomason, 2006).

"The virgin-mother-crone archetypes work together in the unconscious, along with many

other archetypes that each of us male and female, young and old inherit psychologically"

(Ray, 2004, p. 112). Therefore, when we integrate the maiden-mother-crone archetypes

into our psyche we have the possibility of healing transformation (Gomberg, 2001).

The Gifts of Mythology and the Archetypes

Myths and stories can connect us to our soul and allow for healing. This concept is

the gift of mythology and the archetypes. Gerontologists Holstein and Minkler (2003)

argue that it is through myths and images that reflect society's values and beliefs that

older women construct their identities and self-perception. To return to the primordial

nature of the crone archetype that honors women in both myths and stories, older women

can thus find wholeness and healing as they transition through the last stage of their life.

Mythology's gift. Myths can provide incredible insights and meaning to the human

experience. In her article "Finding clues to who we are in myths and archetypes",

psychologist and feminist writer Madonna Kolbenschlag (2006) describes the power of

myths:

> Myths provide a framework for interpreting experience, for making sense
> of the world and choosing a response. Myth offer ways of ordering
> experience; they give us insight about ourselves and become a defense
> against chaos. They describe scenario for human action and give meaning
> to our common history. These narrative metaphors are imprinted on our
> consciousness like fingerprints: they are practically indelible. (p.144)

Kolbenschalag (1996, 2006) argues that these myths, images, and archetypes invoke

women to reflect back to the holistic primordial image of woman, to reclaim those

images in themselves and receive the power within them.

Jungian analyst, Clarissa Pinkola Estés, PhD (1996) in her book *Women Who Run*

with the Wolves, Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype, describes the capacity

of mythologies to draw the instinctive nature from the psyche. A profound awakening

occurs that initiates a healing process which was generated in the form of story, legends,

folktales, fairy tales, and myths (Estés, 1996).

Joseph Campbell (2008), the foremost authority in the field of mythology, believed

that the symbolic nature of myths has the capacity and insight to connect the

psychological, the spiritual, and the artistic realms to understand the human experience.

In an interview with Bill Moyers (Tatge & Moyers, 1991), Campbell describes

mythology as the "song of the universe", inferring that it is embedded in our unconscious

and through this symbolic form we find realization. Campbell (2008) utilizes God as the

ultimate metaphor that he believes transcend all category of thought. However, it is this

symbolic metaphor and the inability for Western thought to grasp the concept of myth

that confounds Campbell the most (Lane, 1989).   Campbell argues that Western culture

focuses on what he terms "demythologization", to describe metaphors as facts (Lane,

1989).   Campbell argues that the point of the myth itself is symbolic, not factual (Lane,

1989).   Campbell believes that our common psychological roots can be revealed from

primordial images that existed in mythology (Campbell, 2008; Tatge & Moyers, 1991).

He also believes that myths have the capacity to bring forth the inner wisdom or soul of

the individual from the unconscious (Campbell, 2008; Tatge & Moyers, 1991).

Gift of archetypal forms. The archetypal forms can be described as norms,

instincts or psychological behavioral patterns that, according to Carl Jung, exist in our

unconscious as collective fingerprints that are present in myths and images across

cultures and time (Kolbenschlag, 1996, 2006). From a positivist's view, that generally

argues the validity of innateness of the theory of the collective unconscious, this

"phenomena suggest that there exist internal psychological forces that allow us to

respond in common ways to stories and story characters" (Faber & Mayer, 2009)

The collective unconscious, as defined by Carl Jung, "in addition to our immediate

personal conscious … there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal and

impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals and is inherited…It consists of pre-

existent forms, the archetypes" (Jung, 1968, para. 90).   In Goodwyn's (2010) analysis,

"Approaching archetypes: Reconsidering innateness", she points out that Jung suggested

that our unconscious behavior (the psyche) has evolved, just the same as our bodies have

biological histories. "The images can function as symbolic triggers especially significant at the time of socio-cultural transitions, therefore making it imperative to read, interpret, and understand the meanings of those important signs that act out in human culture" (Semetsky, 2010, p.103).

Both Jungian analyst, Jean Shinoda Bolen (1994, 2001), and medical intuitive Caroline Myss (2003) believe that archetypes act as internal guides to give affirmations of deep knowing and meaning to ones life experiences, as well as give guidance for direction. As Jungian psychologist and theologian, Ann Belford Ulanov states, "If she [women] responds to the archetypes underlying her nature, then she can respond to the deep motivations that the archetypes provide, which can only enrich her life, her relation to others, and her contributions to her society" (1971, p. 211).

Older Women in America

Ronald Blythe provides a description of the conundrum facing the study of aging:

Perhaps, with full-life spans the norm, people may need to learn how to be aged as they once had to learn to be adult. - Ronald Blythe, *The view in the Winter* (as cited in Cruikshank, 2003, p. ix)

The aging demographics are significant in light of the "baby boom" generation now entering retirement age, has influenced formulated cultural views of the aging, as well as policy, in particular for women. The first part of this section explains the way society views aging and how it is socially constructed and dependent upon society's values and beliefs (Cruikshank, 2003). This constructed view about aging sets the norms based on culture and especially impacts the self-perception of the older women (Cruikshank, 2003). The next section explains the aging demographics of women. The literature demonstrates a few models that are influential in the field of Gerontology – "Successful

Aging" and "What is Normal Aging?" The following section captures some of the more

harmful myths and misconceptions of the elderly population. Many of these common

myths and stereotypes are internalized by older women and can negatively affect their

well-being. As a result of negative perceptions, thoughts, and emotions, older women are

more susceptible to illness.

Aging is socially constructed. In the field of gerontology, the branch of science

that studies aging and the issues of older persons, there are numerous gerontologists that

are identifying what influences aging the most. The issues are greatly impacted by the

social, political, and economic arenas that set policy and create a platform for how

society views aging (Cruikshank, 2003; Holstein & Minkler, 2003; Ray, 2004;

Thomason, 2006; Woodward, 2003).

Gerontologist, Martha Cruikshank (2003), in her book *Learning to Be Old: Gender,*

Culture and Aging, argues that the way society views aging is "socially constructed" (p.

ix) and is learned. Social norms about the aging population are based on society's beliefs

and values which are then projected upon the older people and, according to Cruikshank

(2003), are more influential than biological physical changes in the bodies of the elderly.

In Cruikshank's analysis about aging, she states:

> Learning to be old means fully experiencing the physical, bodily changes
> that accompany aging while at the same time recognizing that those
> changes occur in a particular social setting, influenced by our ethnicity,
> class, and gender, and by the political and economic climate.
> (Cruikshank, 2003, p.1)

As a gerontologist studying the issues of aging, Cruikshank (2003) sees the importance

and necessity of preparing the individuals in their final stages of life, which is beneficial

to both the aging population and society as a whole.

Gerontologist Sally Palmer Thomason (2006) addresses similar ideas about how aging is influenced by social beliefs in her book *The Living Spirit of the Crone: Turning Aging Inside Out.* Thomason (2006) concurs with Cruikshank that cultural beliefs and values are learned over time, and she points out that they become embedded and reinforced. They are generally unconsciously accepted as truths, regardless if they are destructive in nature (Thomason, 2006). In her opinion, one example of this concept is society's focus on the preservation of youth, including the prevalence of anti-aging messages, such as the preference of aging women to color their graying hair. In her book, Thomason (2006) addresses the older woman's perception of self that she believes determines how a woman views aging.

In rationalizing her point, Thomason (2006) utilizes research findings from Susan Heidrich, Ph.D., R.N. from the school of Nursing at the University of Wisconsin, who did a study on aging women and self-perception over a long period of time. Heidrich (1998, 1999) discovered as women aged their self-perception seemed to decline. Their sense of purpose and ability, as a gauge of self-worth, diminished over time. In her findings, an actual decline in physical health or economic resources did not seem to be a determinant of diminished self-perception for the aging women she interviewed (which she explained is due to the capacity of these women to adapt to such situations). From these findings, Thomason (2006) infers society's views of the aging subsequently influence the self-perception of aging women. She therefore questions, "Do the beliefs of an elder about old age become a self-fulfilling prophecy?" (Thomason, 2006, p. 7).

Looking at the manners in which society "socially constructs" aging, Cruikshank (2003) identifies the drive towards *medicalization* as one influence. She explains this

concept as society's "quick fix with a pill mentality" whereby, in her opinion, women over the age of 80 are overly medicated without undergoing sufficient drug testing. The medicalization is further promoted as a result of culture's emphasis on youthfulness coupled with the goal of healthy aging, that is absent of disease and disability (Cruikshank, 2003). Pharmaceutical companies, wielding their money and power, provide solutions to combat aging and disease with more and more drugs, aggravating and perpetuating the medicalization of the aging population.

Martha Holstein (2001), a scholar in the field of gerontology, in her essay titled "A Feminist Perspective on Anti-Aging Medicine," suggests that in the past, normal bodily conditions for women have been treated as pathological, needing some form of medical intervention, and medicalization. Holistic physician Christine Northrup (1994) considers the pathological view of women's normal body conditions (e.g. menstruation, hormones, aging processes) as leading women to perceive their biological processes as un-natural and abnormal. This further leads women to the point where they become apologetic about their bodies (Northrup, 1994). Holstein (2001) emphasizes this premise by stating that "implications of anti-aging medicine are morally and practically significant because they can influence the perceptions women have of themselves, their identity and their sense of moral worthiness in negative ways" (p.39).

When culture values youthfulness, importance is given to body image, and then aging women are defined as "old bodies", whereby image becomes their self-perception (Cruikshank, 2003). "Just as dark-skinned people under colonization are viewed only as manifestations of color, the old are equated with declining bodies" (Cruikshank, 2003, p. 4). Drawing from the writings by Brent Green titled "Internal colonialism vs. the

Elderly," printed in 1979 in the Berkeley Journal of Sociology, Cruikshank (2003)

demonstrates the similarities of how society views aging women to that of colonization.

Cruikshank points out common characteristics in how society views aging women that

are similar to methods used to colonize dark-skinned people. Both populations are

repeatedly given messages of inferiority or viewed as less intelligent; they are taken

advantage of by society; they are judged entirely by their physical image and the

expectation to model society's ideal.

     Aging demographics and women. The large increase in the aging population is

the impact of baby boomer generation, that are now entering retirement (Rowe & Kahn,

1998). They are a large and powerful demographic group, the majority of which are

women (Cruikshank, 2003; Holstein & Minkler, 2003; Thomason, 2006). For women

during their working years or middle ages, a significant gap in comparison to men in

wages, political power, and social status remains, leaving aging women to enter

retirement age with fewer resources in many cases (Cruikshank, 2003; Holstein &

Minkler, 2003; Thomason, 2006). This was illustrated in the June 2010 release of the

report *Status of Women & Girls in Minnesota* conducted by the University of Minnesota

Humphrey Institute's Center on Women & Public Policy (Women's Foundation of

Minnesota, 2010). The report clearly articulates the poverty dilemma for women by

stating

> Headlines gloss over gross gender bias and unfairness that continues to
> produce the wage gap, land more women in poverty than men, result in
> systemic violence for women and girls, substandard health outcomes for
> all, and a lack of women in leadership across all sectors.
> (Women's Foundation of Minnesota, 2010, p.1)

Normal aging - successful aging. The field of gerontology has formulated several studies of aging. The literature emphasizes the most popularly disseminated study completed by Rowe and Kahn in 1997 titled *Successful Aging*, which has become the standard in the gerontology field (Cruikshank, 2003; Thomason, 2006). Another report from an ongoing study, worth evaluating to get a sense of what is perceived as important in the field, was completed in 2008 by the National Institute on Aging, part of the National Institute of Health (NIH), titled *Healthy Aging, Lessons from the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging*.

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging (BLSA) began their on-going study over 50 years ago to focus on research about how to increase life-expectancy with fewer years of disability (NIH, 2008). In asking this question, "What is normal aging?" (p.1), the BLSA's goal was to separate out the aging process from disease, economic or social disadvantages, or lack of opportunities to determine the effects of aging from a biological standpoint (NIH, 2008). The BLSA reported two conclusions: first, disease is separate from aging and can be distinguished; and second, there does not exist only one model of aging, everyone ages differently.

In 1997, John Rowe, M.D. and Robert Kahn, PhD. completed the research titled "Successful Aging". The research was done over the span of 10 years with the objective to define what factors predict "successful aging" (Rowe & Kahn, 1997, 1998). Rowe and Kahn (1997, 1998) identified three factors that determine "successful aging." Their model consists of three key components: evading disease and disability, maintaining physical and mental activity, and the presence of active social involvement. They found

that it was a combination of these components that would influence successful aging and the best combination was dependent upon the individual (Rowe & Kahn, 1997, 1998).

Both the BLSA's "What is normal aging?" and Rowe and Kahn's research "Successful Aging" have made great inroads regarding issues in the field of gerontology, and have dispelled a few myths about aging (Cruikshank, 2003; Thomason, 2006). However, several scholars in the field of gerontology greatly criticize many aspects "normal aging" and "successful aging". The terminology "normal" or "successful" is dualistic language and is arbitrary to individual preference or to what is normal or successful for them, and seems to promote a false measurement of an ideal or effective level of functioning at old age (Cruikshank, 2003; Holstein & Minkler, 2003). Some gerontologists caution about the implications of Rowe and Kahn's 1997 research, utilizing what seems to be a prototype of a white, male, middle-class professional (Cruikshank, 2003; Holstein & Minkler, 2003; Thomason, 2006). They argue this model excludes those most vulnerable already in society, older women, poor (or lower class) and ethnic or minority populations.

Holstein and Minkler (2003), in their research "Self, Society, and the 'New Gerontology'," view "Successful Aging" as a model of prevention to change behavior in order to essentially counter the myth "decline and loss" of old age. In their opinion, there seems to be a denial of accepting normal aging processes by overlooking the aging in of itself in arriving at some other model. Holstein and Minkler (2003) in their research rationalize the need for a critical approach to gerontology, rather than just developing models under a positivist paradigm view based on conventional science principles, is essential, if not ethical, to studying the aging and issues relating to aging. A critical

question to ask, "Who benefits and who is harmed by prevailing culturally normative standards?" (Holstein & Minkler, 2003, p.791), as a basis for gerontological studies that set precedence, such as "Successful Aging" or BLSA's "Normal Aging".

Harmful myths and misconceptions. Despite much disapproval from critical-minded gerontologists, pointing out that both the BLSA and Rowe and Kahn studies dispel several negative myths of aging that society has typically held, they still find that treating aging as pathological exists in culture and has been slow to change (Cruikshank, 2003; Holstein & Minkler, 2003).

Thomason (2006) demonstrates the cultural influences about aging that are in popular media in the example of several *D words* that sociologist William Sadler coined: "disease, decline, dependency, depression and decrepitude" (p. 7). Culture associates these D words with the older population and in return they identify with and internalize these words. In Rowe and Kahn's (1997) research they debunked the idea that "you can't teach an old dog a new trick," which would suggest that older people are not as dependent as previously thought (Thomason, 2006). Through research about cognitive function in old age, they found evidence that mental capacity could be maintained and even enhanced (Rowe & Kahn, 1997).

Human emotions and personal character of the aging are still stereotyped. The BLSA 2008 study disproved the myth "older people get meaner". They discovered that people who are generally cheerful and pleasant in their 30s will generally have the same disposition in their 80s (NIH, 2008). "This research finding runs contrary to the popular belief that people naturally become cranky, depressed, and withdrawn as they age" (NIH, 2008, p.9). Other harmful stereotypes of older women are: mean old lady, crabby, angry,

old hag, whiney, or flabby older women seen as "letting themselves go" (Holstein, 2001; Holstein & Minkler, 2003). Holstein (2001) finds these stereotypes create a paradox of sorts, in that older women experience the feeling of being "invisible" in society.

Thomason (2006) adds another D word to Sadler's list, "denial", referring to a cultural emphasis on the preservation of youth. Holstein and Minkler (2003) argue that the ideal of preserving youthfulness, or what they term "Anti-Aging Medicine", will generate negative consequences, such as declining self-image that will be more prominent for aging women than for men. Women have been conditioned their entire life that body image is important and based on this belief they are also conditioned to seek out the "male gaze" or "the look" (Holstein, 2001; Stalp, Radina, & Lynch, 2008). It is through the "male gaze" that women perceive themselves and act accordingly (Holstein, 2001). Other research regarding the "Red Hat Society" (RHS) demonstrates the phenomenon of older women seeking the male gaze (Stalp et al., 2008). Wearing their bright colored red hats and displaying boisterous behavior in public, the researchers argue that these women are attempting to receive the male gaze once again, which they have been conditioned to receive their entire lives (Stalp et al., 2008). At the same time, the RHS members are in "some ways mocking the feminine expectations for midlife" (Stalp et al., 2008, p. 329) that society imposes upon them as older women, and through participation in the RHS allows them to escape their daily unpaid responsibilities to pursue leisure.

When these myths become an issue to someone's identity is when they associate themselves with societal expectations or norms in the myths that are negative (Thomason, 2006). Thomason points out when culture perceives the aged as the problem, in the

example of Sadler's D words, then it is hard for an older person to have a positive self-image. Ironically, it is the same cultural values that helped form a women's identity when they were younger, now when they are older, gives them the feeling that they are failures (Holstein, 2001).   This cultural separation of the aged diminishes their self-perception and limits their attempt to socially integrate into society (Thomason, 2006).

Negative perceptions, thoughts, and emotions impact wellbeing. The wise woman image is typically constrained and detached from certain emotions; similar to how older women are stereotyped by certain emotions they express (Woodward, 2003). Kathleen Woodward, a respected scholar and gerontologist, in her research essay, titled "Against Wisdom: The Social Politics of Anger and Aging," argues that anger is a normal, healthy expression for aging people and to deny it has possible negative consequences. Woodward (2003) points out that Western ideals typically view wisdom as reason and balanced judgment that is calm, stoic, and without emotion. Woodward (2003) utilizes the writings of two scholars that reflect deeply about the perception of anger at an older age and how they came to articulate the importance of expressing this emotion, particularly as wise-anger and contrary to how society perceives this expression by the aged.

Founding member of the American Psychology Association, G.Stanely Hall, in his book *Senescence: The Last Half of Life* reflects upon his life and acknowledges that as an older person, he experienced the repression of feelings that were not expected to be outwardly expressed by society (Woodward, 2003). Hall believed that having intense emotion, even anger, was as appropriate for him as an old man, as it is typically manifested in the younger generation. For women, Woodward (2003) demonstrates this

same concept from the scholar Betty Freidan's book The *Fountain of Age*, whereby

Freidan defines rage as a transforming agent, energy of sorts, which can be utilized to

create deep transformation. Cruikshank (2003) also draws on Freidan's wisdom in that

Freidan believed that "decreased resistance to disease in elders may be caused partly by

low self-esteem, a sense of powerlessness, and few opportunities for meaningful

participation in society" (2003, p.77). Both Woodward (2003) and Cruikshank (2003)

argue it is necessary for the aged to be able to express their outrage with cultural

injustices that repress their wellbeing and sense of self; that to deny this expression of

emotion, such as anger, is essentially denying their existence in society.

A lifetime exposure of emotions, perceptions, and thought become imbedded as

cellular memories that ultimately affect our biological reactions in our body and influence

our wellbeing, which can possibly lead to illness (Cruikshank, 2003; Northrup, 1994;

Thomason, 2006). The study of psychoneuroimmunology demonstrates affect of stress

on disease and the impact on the central nervous and immune systems (Pert, 1997). Our

well-being is greatly influenced by emotions and perceptions that have been learned and

can override our DNA coding, regardless of inheritance (Lipton, 2005).

A review of the literature suggests that the way culture views aging is learned,

creating perceptions that older women relate to and is where they find their identities.

Also evident from research is that when the myths and stereotypes that are utilized to

express society's view of older women are negative and degrading to women's self-

perception, there tends to be a fear of the aging population created by society. Feeding

this fear leads to damage in the way society approaches the aging. The research

demonstrates, that by denying the aged the right to express healthy emotion and by living

in a culture that emphasizes youthfulness, the aging population is denied a life cycle that affirms them as human beings. Many gerontologists and others scholars in fields that study issues relating to women demonstrate the need to bring awareness to the topic and to learn a new way of relating aging issues for women.

Deconstructing Harmful Myths

This section covers the literature with arguments as to why the negative myths about older women need to be deconstructed and then reconstructed to honor older women. Older women who are transitioning their own life cycle need a different example of transformation that is not the male-centered way of transformation in the example of the hero's journey (Ray & McFadden, 2001). Honoring older women requires myths that give examples of the importance in passing down of women's intuition generation to generation (Estés, 1992). Myths and stories that are reconstructed by culture to honor women also need to be in relation to actual women's experiences and from their perceptions (Kolbenschlag, 1996; Ress, 2006).

Deconstructing myth. Scholars from various disciplines argue that critical analysis is necessary to understand how myths and images created by culture influence older women who then construct their identities from them (Estés, 1992; Holstein, 2001; Holstein & Minkler, 2003; Ray & McFadden, 2001; Thomason, 2006; Walker, 1985). In motivation of a desired cultural norm to be promoted, myths have been altered or completely buried and do not represent the lived experience of women (Bolen, 2001; Estés, 1992; Walker, 1996; Walker, 1985).

Gerontologist Ruth Ray and Psychologist Susan McFadden argue that the hero's journey is not a good metaphor for women transitioning into their aging years. In their

research titled "The Web and the Quilt: Alternatives to the Heroic Journey toward

Spiritual Development" (Ray & McFadden, 2001), they criticize the widely accepted

model of transformation known as the hero's journey. In the hero's journey, personal

growth or transformation happens in the form of separation and individualism before the

individual returns to society spiritually whole (Ray & McFadden, 2001). This process

does not take into account communal or relational concepts as "women and minorities

tend to value group identity over individualism, finding power and agency in collectivity"

(Ray & McFadden, 2001, p. 202). Ray and McFadden suggest utilizing different

metaphors to represent the process of spiritual development for women in the form of the

"Web" and the "Quilt". The "Web" gives the image of a woven network that is durable

yet flexible, very functional in nature and esthetically beautiful. The "Quilt"

demonstrates that spirituality is acquired through layers and over time, and comes in

various forms, while maintaining an inner-connectedness that would not be the same by

itself. Women's spiritual essence is not so much reflected in the rational, individualistic

images found in the hero's journey, but rather in the metaphor of the "Web" and the

"Quilt" that are naturally reflective of women's relational and intuitive nature (Ray &

McFadden, 2001).

　　　Estés (1996) points out the importance of recognizing myths that have been

sanitized and modified to meet societal norms, effectively repressing the archetype, and

that become embedded without our consciousness. Estés (1996) demonstrates that

various mythic stories have been created or modified to give the image of older women

as "old hag" or mean-spirited. One example is the fairytale of Red Riding Hood, where

the wolf is disguised as the grandmother. In contrast to this manipulative wolf, Estés

uncovers the once popular Mexican myth, *La Loba* about a woman who is called *La Que Sabe* (meaning the one who knows). *La Loba* is the collector of bones and the protector of what is in danger of being lost. Once she has collected every bone of the wolf, she sits by the fire and sings songs until she slowly transforms into a wolf, which runs free, later changing once more into a laughing women who disappears into the horizon (Estés, 1996). According to Estés, *La Loba* represents wise-women wisdom of the soul, the bones are the indestructible force of life, the transformation is the resurrection story of connecting with the underworld, and the final dissention is an expression of great love in the depths of the psyche. *La Loba* is the cycle of life that finishes with the wise women; from seed to life and then to bones.

Mary Judith Ress (2006), found in her writings entitled "Searching for our Own Voices: Con-spirando's Summer School of Ecofeminist Spirituality" that each year since 2000 Con-spirando created a forum for women to learn and experience the archetype at work through myth. They began to realize that women had internalized so many harmful myths that they had to deconstruct the myths, or uncover older myths similar in nature to what Estés has done in her research (Ress, 2006).

> Participants developed understandings of myth based on their own experiences, examining in particular those myths that deal with women's bodies, how myths evolve in the human psyche, and how they develop in an individual woman's life cycle. This analysis included the cultural and psychological need for myths and how they can be transformed from using their power over us to myths that empower ourselves. (Ress, 2006, p. 140)

Con-spirando's Summer School created a safe space for women of Latin America to gather together deepening their evolving spiritualties and understanding their lived experience in relation to myths.

Fairytales and folklore have denoted the older woman as a "witch" and have

characterized her with an initially friendly posture, which later in the story becomes evil

or mean-spirited (Cruikshank, 2003; Estés, 1996). The old women in these cases are

generally mythic witches. During the inquisition and the burning of the witches, these

so-called "witches" were generally the older wise-women healers and midwifes,

knowledgeable in herbs and remedies. Although they were also thought to be heretics

and were brutally executed (Bolen, 2001; Cruikshank, 2003; Ehrenreich & English, 1973;

Kolbenschlag, 1996; Walker, 1985). "The witch-hunts left a lasting effect: an aspect of

the female has ever since been associated with the witch, and an aura of contamination

has remained – especially towards the midwife and other women healers (Ehrenreich &

English, 1973, p. 6). Jean Shinoda Bolen (2001) suggests that suppressed memories in

the collective unconscious can resurface later for women through morphic resonance

when the time is right.

> Morphic resonance theory suggests that we may be able to access
> collective memories of pre-patriarchal times when older women had
> authority, as well as those derived from centuries of the Inquisition, when
> any woman of crone age was at risk of being denounced, tortured, and
> burnt at the stake. (Bolen, 2001, p. xxvi-xxvii).

By acknowledging the historical repression of the healer/midwife/wise-woman, women

today carry these morphic memories in themselves, thus allowing suppressed archetypes

into Western culture (Bolen, 1994, 2001; Cruikshank, 2003; Walker, 1985).

Activating the Crone

This section reviews the literature for an explaining of the relationship of the crone

archetype with older women. The crone archetype is a dynamic form that is "activated"

in the psyche through a process over time, not just through the assumption of crone

characteristics (Bolen, 2001)

      Becoming the crone. To be a crone is not just assuming the characteristics of the

crone, but a process of becoming the crone (Ray, 2004). The crone archetype is a

dynamic structure guiding us to the stage of *croning*. Taking from Jung's metaphor of

crystallization, Bolen (2001) describes the process as when the crystal takes its archetypal

form, and only if conditions exist will it form, once it has formed it will be recognized as

a particular dynamic archetype. To activate the crone archetype is tapping into the

psychic energy of the crone that is in the unconscious, that is recognized and helps forms

older women's identities (Ray, 2004). Once we identify our human experience with the

myth and also become aware of the myth's power, we activate and enter a process of

transformation initiated by the archetypal image inherent in our psyche (Bolen, 1994,

2001).

      Ann Belford Ulanov in her book *The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and in*

Christian Theology (1971), looking at the archetypes as dynamic relational identities,

utilizes concepts from Jung's protégé, Toni Wolff. "The archetypal forms of the feminine

describe certain basic ways of channeling one's feminine instincts and one's orientation

to cultural factors" (Ulanov, 1971, p. 194). Wolff describes four psychological structural

forms of the feminine as the Mother (nurturer), the Hetaira (lover/creative force), the

Amazon (warrior), and the Medium (wisewoman), of one which we principally identify

with, but we all have parts of each in our psyche (Ulanov, 1971). The archetypes are

patterns or forms in the unconscious; they are energy-field-like transformers that

represent a way of expressing a relationship (Kolbenschag, 1996). The chakra energy of

our body, the aura, is argued to contain our biology, biography, and collective archetypal

patterns (Myss, 2003). Kolbenschlag (2006) argues that

> There seems to be some credibility in Jung's theory of the collective
> unconscious and the innateness of archetypes in light of studies that
> propose our bodies cells contain memory and evidence of morphogenic
> fields, which could support the idea that 'archetypes exist as autonomous
> energy fields.' (2006, p. 144)

Bolen (1994) points out similarities about the theory of the collective unconscious

and Sheldrake's theory on morphic fields. They both rationalize the existence of

collective memories, knowledge, and images that are accessible to humans without

having to learn them from experience (Bolen, 1994). In simple terms, Bolen (2001) uses

Sheldrake's analogy of our DNA acting as a television receiver (that is before cable T.V.)

designed to receive transmissions (which are the morphic fields). When we choose to

tune into a channel, we resonate with the image (archetypal images, memories, and

behavioral patterns). Sheldrake argued that not only do we resonate with the morphic

fields, we influence the field and become influenced by them (Bolen, 1994). Morphic

fields become cumulative memory, containing all human experiences (Sheldrake, 1981,

2005). Bolen (1994) views that the awareness, the connecting with the image from the

collective unconscious (the morphic field), is not established until "activated". Bolen

(1994) defines her "activation" terminology as depending on the channel that is chosen to

tune into and is dependent on what part of the psyche we identify with. "If we are in our

soul or in touch with the Self (rather than identified with the ego or the persona or a

complex), we will be open to receiving spiritual or soulful experiences" (Bolen, 1994, p.

97). The theory that cells contain memories and the blending of neuroscience and

analytical psychology may explain the phenomena of the collective unconscious; to

explain the innate knowledge of symbolic meaning without being learned from cultural

behaviors (Vezzoli, 2009).

Conclusion

The way aging women enter their third and final stage of life is greatly impacted by

society's perception of older women that is internalized by them as part of their identity.

The crone archetype is a dynamic relationship that older women can tap into to prepare

them for the process of transitioning their life cycle. There is sufficient literature about

the crone archetype, however there is little research that addresses the actual lived

experience of women activating crone archetypes or identifying with a crone archetypal

image. To further understand the activation process of the crone archetype, it is essential

to first describe the lived experience of aging women who already identify with the

crone. Therefore, my research question is what is the lived experience of women who

"activate" a crone archetypal image?

Research Lenses

The purpose of this chapter is to describe pertinent theories of this research and to critically assess my professional and personal experiences that have impacted the development, implementation, and interpretation of this research topic. My research focus is a result of seeds planted long ago that have flourished and blossomed based on many of my experiences. I have learned that all things are connected which has laid the foundation for my conscious being to take action. But it is my unconscious being, my sleeping inner wisdom that awaits my willingness to listen and activate what is already within me, which will restore the necessary connection and balance within.

The first section in this chapter describes the theoretical lenses important to this research, which are: mythology and the archetypes; liberating empowerment; the shadow side, transformation, anima/animus; connection and balance of the universe; psychoneuroimmunology and epigenetics; and morphic fields, resonance and archetypal form. The following sections of this chapter are my professional and personal experiences through which I view the world, from my perspective, and my voice. They have influenced every aspect of my research process. They allow the reader to understand what has motivated me and which point of view is important to me. In being transparent to the reader of this research, and to the women participants, I am upholding the utmost ethical standard in doing research. My theoretical, professional, and personal lenses become transparent to the reader, uncovering the influences and motivations underlying my research purpose and process.

Theoretical Lenses

Several theories create a framework for exploring women who "activate" the crone archetype.   Archetypes and mythology provide insights into human experiences; they are collectively found across multiple cultures and throughout time (Campbell 2008; Jung, 1968). Throughout history, some myths have been changed, reflecting negative images of older women (Kolbenschalag, 2006; Ress, 2006). These myths have subsequently been internalized by women and have made it necessary to reclaim old myths that honor women to return them to their primordial nature and find healing (Kolbenschalag, 1996, 2006; Ress, 2006). Science now can explain how our thoughts, perceptions, and emotions can affect our biology and wellbeing (Lipton, 2005; Pert, 1997). Liberation theology and Paulo Freire's (2003) critical pedagogy can provide a tool to empower women and enable them to utilize their own wisdom to honor their rightful place in society (Gerbara, 2002).

It is important to understand human inter-connections with all creation, because this returns us to a relationship of balance, which ultimately determines our earths' survival (Berry, 1988; Macy & Brown, 1998; Swimme & Berry, 1992). Some of the oldest images that have been excavated from the earth represent ancient mythology connecting humans to the universe (Gimbutas, 1989). These ancient images, such as the "Mother Earth", symbolize the cycle of life (life, death, rebirth) that relates to both the earth's cycles and that of women (Bolen, 2001; Gimbutas, 1989, Walker, 1996). When women "activate" the crone archetype, they essentially become in touch with primordial images that are a part of their being (Bolen, 2001). Carl Jung's concept of the collective unconscious can possibly be explained by Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphic fields

and resonance that capture and share cumulative memories over time (Sheldrake, 1981, 2005).

Mythology and the archetypes.   Joseph Campbell, the foremost authority on mythology, in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (2008) viewed the hero's journey as a symbolic cycle of human transformation that requires an inward journey prior to realization. Campbell saw the capacity of mythology to connect symbolic figures and stories, allowing individuals to enter into the psychological and spiritual realms to understand the human experience (Campbell, 2008; Tatge & Moyers, 1991). Campbell referred to mythology as the song of the universe that he believed was embedded in our subconscious (Tatge & Moyers, 1991). Campbell thought that our common psychological roots could be revealed from the primordial images that existed in mythology (Campbell, 2008).

Carl Jung assumed primordial images represented the archetypes that are collectively recognizable to our unconscious and have been present across cultures and throughout time (Campbell, 1990; Tatge & Moyers, 1991). He defined the collective unconscious, a psychic system outside of our personal conscious, as "in addition to our immediate personal conscious … there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals and is inherited…It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes" (Jung, 1968, para. 90). We seem to immediately connect with the archetypal figure, even without prior knowledge of them existing. These archetypal figures are represented in folktales, mythic stories, literature, as well as in various art forms, music, and are present in films and other media.

Myths, images, and archetypes call women to reflect back to the holistic primordial image of women, to reclaim those images in themselves and to receive the power within them (Kolbenschalag, 2006). However, throughout history, degrading and harmful myths about women have evolved (e.g. midwives as witches, old hag) and have been internalized by women (Ress, 2006). It has been necessary to deconstruct these myths and uncover older myths that honor women to their rightful place (Ress, 2006).

Liberating empowerment. Countless Christian stories have portrayed women as evil, have defined evil as stemming from their existence, and have carried these views into cultural beliefs and values (Gebara, 2002). Ivone Gebara, a leading feminist philosopher and theologian in Latin America, argues that these Christian stories are harmful and destructive to women. "For men, evil is an act one can undo. But for women, evil is in their very being" (Gebara, 2002, p. 4). Gebara (2002) further points out how women can become entrapped by stories that turn into beliefs, such as the story about Eve which infers that women are inherently evil. In addition, Eve's dissociation from the Tree of Knowledge represents the denial of embodied knowledge, inner knowing, from women that they still struggle today to reclaim (Kolbenschlag, 1996). Subsequently, women have become silenced by the story which has become commonly accepted by culture as a fundamental belief, because it is in the Bible and is considered the word of God (Gebara, 2002). Still today, women find that the same false stories entrap them because they have become common beliefs and negatively influence their self-perception (Gebara, 2002). Gebara (2002) believed that through women's lived experiences, they could find the strength to overcome oppression and be liberated.

Gebara (2002) was a proponent of Liberation Theology, but from a feminist perspective. Through Liberation Theology, which was first named by Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez, Christians who suffered from poverty or oppression would read the scripture stories through their experiences and lenses, and interpret them radically different than the institution (Boff & Boff, 2003; Gutiérrez, 2000). Accordingly, well known theologians of Liberation Theology, Gustavo Gutiérrez and Leonardo Boff, believed that people became liberated from the social injustice they endured by finding empowerment to address the source of their oppression (Boff & Boff, 2003; Gutiérrez, 2000).

Paulo Freire (2003), an educator and philosopher, applies similar threads of Liberation Theology and created what is now called critical pedagogy. He argued that the oppressed, in the position of internalized inferiority, through their experiences, can unleash themselves from their oppression (Freire, 2003). Freire also believed the manner in which the population is educated is based on political directives. In Freire's book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2003), his philosophy focuses on the belief that humans inherently carry knowledge, and from this basis they create knowledge. This is contrary to Western positivist thought that human beings began with a blank slate that needed to be filled (Freire, 2003). In practice, the educator becomes the facilitator, not the expert about the subject, and tries to motivate the learner to extract their inner knowledge in the creation of new learning (Freire, 2003). Gebara was attuned to Freire's principles and utilized these concepts to empower women to unleash their own oppression and the destructive nature of myths in Christian stories (Gerbara, 2002).

The shadow side – transformation – anima/animus. Looking at liberation from another angle, Gebara (2002) points out that we are all, in a way, beholden to evil in ourselves, even though theology and scriptures commonly interpret evil as outside of us. One example of this is the commonly used phrase "the devil made me do it". Carl Jung (1968) also referred to this evil as the shadow side of our psyche, the part of us we do not like, or the negative side of our personality. Jung argued that the shadow side was denied and repressed by Christian theology and believed that acknowledging the shadow side was part of bringing about wholeness (Hopcke, 1989). It is this type of evil that Gebara describes in her book, *Out of the Depths: Women's Experience of Evil and Salvation* (2002), once we acknowledge our shadow side, it can lead us to the depths within ourselves where it can be transformed and bring us to salvation (Kolbenschlag, 1996; Gerbara, 2002). Therefore, it is through liberation from the evil within ourselves, by entering our dark side, that we can be enlightened (Gerbara, 2002). Joseph Campbell (1990) viewed transformation by the metaphor of the hero's journey to be an above the ground (external) image, while in contrast, the crone archetypal metaphor is represented by going inward, a below the ground (internal) image, to find transformation (Bolen, 2001; Jung, 1968; Kolbenschlag, 1996, 2006 ; Ress, 2006; Ulanov, 1971; Walker, 1996).

Jung observed behavioral characteristics of opposite tendencies in the unconscious, the anima and animus (Hopcke, 1989). The anima consists of more feminine identified qualities, such as emotional, spiritual, and relational characteristics; the animus consists of masculine qualities, such as rational, courage, and aggressiveness characteristics (Hopcke, 1989; Ulanov & Ulanov, 1994). "Jung called this pair contrasexual archetypes to denote how the anima and animus are symbolic modes of perception and behavior

which are represented by figures of the opposite sex within an individual's psyche

(Hopcke, 1989, p. 91). When the anima and animus archetypes are integrated, they

function as a healthy tension between the two that impacts the psychological well-being

of the ego and the self (Ulanov & Ulanov, 1994). The denial or suppression of either the

anima or animus archetype can create an imbalance in the psyche, where it is necessary to

reclaim the side that restores harmony (Kolbenschlag, 1996; Ulanov & Ulanov, 1994).

Connection and balance of the universe.   The metaphor of going inward, besides

representing human transformation, also is symbolic of our connection to the earth and

the universe (Berry, 1988; Macy & Brown, 1998; Swimme & Berry, 1992). Many

widely accepted advances in science demonstrate the intertwined relationship of the

earth, the universe and all creation (Macy & Brown, 1998). An example is the Gaia

theory that purports that the earth and all creation, together with the surrounding

atmospheric levels, is a single living organism itself that self-regulates and evolves

(Berry, 1988; Macy & Brown, 1998; Swimme & Berry, 1992).   Indigenous cultures

around the world already understood these so called newfound scientific principles, in

that they have long associated with "Mother Earth" or the "pacha mama" as the divinity

that gives life and death (Gebara, 2002; Macy & Brown, 1998).

Anthropologist Marija Gimbutas has excavated some of the oldest images of

"Mother Earth" which demonstrate that ancient mythology connected the universe to all

earths' creation (Gimbutas, 1989). According to Gimbutas (1989) regarding these

images,

> [Gynocentric] symbolism is the mystery of birth and earth and the renewal
> of life, not only human but all life on earth and indeed in the whole
> cosmos…Images cluster around: giver of life; wielder of death;
> regeneratrix; earth mother; fertility goddess young and old; rising and

> dying with plant life…She was the single source of all life who took her energy from the springs and wells, from the sun, moon and moist earth. This symbolic system represents cyclical, not linear, mythical time. (p. ix)

Similarly, the crone archetype carries a threefold image of maiden/mother/crone, which is also represented by the life cycle of birth/life/death that correspond to the earth's cycles (e.g. the seasons), and also represents the universe with the phases of the moon (Bolen, 2001; Walker, 1996). Thus, the crone connects us to the earth and the universe.

William Berry's book *The Dream of the Earth* (1988) and the book he co-authored with Brian Swimme, *The Universe Story* (1992) attempts to reconnect us with the earth and the universe to celebrate this great mystery. They both argue that "with all our scientific insight, we have not attained such a meaningful approach to the universe, and thus we have at the present time a distorted mode of human presence upon the earth" (Swimme & Berry, 1992, p. 1). The *Universe Story* takes us back to the very beginning, showing our evolution through scientific terms, with the spiritual mystery yet to be defined by science. Approximately 15 billion years ago the universe was born; over 40,000 years ago Homo sapiens arrived; and from this point our first language patterns were developed (Swimme & Berry, 1992). Based on this chronological time frame, it seems odd that today our modern calendar system is anchored to a date going back only some 2000 years, or around the birth of Jesus. From this basis, it seems that we anchor only the historical and scientific perspectives, while ignoring findings that came before which are based on ancient wisdom (Macy & Brown, 1998). We cannot erase the majority of evolution (prior to 2000 years ago) as not being significant enough to factor in to how we desire the earth to evolve in the future. Yet Berry (1988) suggests, "We must now understand that our own well-being can be achieved only through the well-

being of the entire natural world about us" (p. xv). It is essential to return to a balanced

relationship with the earth and to honor our inter-connectedness with all living systems

(Macy & Brown, 1998). Through this relationship the earth will survive (Macy & Brown,

1998).

Psychoneuroimmunology and epigentics. A lifetime exposure of emotions,

perceptions, and thought become imbedded as cellular memories that ultimately affect

our biology and wellbeing, and can lead to illness (Cruikshank, 2003; Northrup, 1994;

Thomason, 2006). Scientific evidence now exists that demonstrate this connection. The

study of psychoneuroimmunology looks at the effects of stress on disease and the impact

on the central nervous and immune systems (Pert, 1997). Candace B. Pert, Ph.D. (1997)

is considered one of the foremost researchers in the field of psychoneuroimmunology. In

her book, *Molecules of Emotion: Why You feel the Way You Feel* (1997)*,* she describes

the discovery of neuropeptides that function as hormone messengers that communicate

back and forth to the brain from organs of the body. Pert (1997) revealed that the

molecule cells of our body contain receptors which have the capacity to store memory

and adapt to emotional responses, and perceptions.

Similar to Pert's concept that molecules adapt to our emotions, Lipton in his book

The Biology of Belief (2005), focuses on the study of epigenetics that looks at how the

environment influences our DNA or cell molecule activity. In the advent of the Human

Genome Project, most of Lipton's colleagues set out to indentify the DNA sequence and

the role it plays on disease, as it was generally believed that because our genes are

inherited they must also control our biological development (Lipton, 2005). To the

dismay of these scientists, the human genome is not complex enough to support the view

that life is controlled solely by our genes (Lipton, 2005). Lipton (2005) argues that our DNA is only a molecular blueprint used in construction of our cells and that it is the physical and energetic environment that influences and molds the development of our genes. For example, emotions and perceptions are learned behavior and can override our DNA coding, regardless of the DNA that was inherited (Lipton, 2005). He further rationalizes that stress, negative thoughts, and perceptions can re-program the body's cells to negatively affect our health (Lipton, 2005).

Morphic fields, resonance, and archetypal form. One theoretical example demonstrating our connection to the universe is found in the Gaia theory. Another theory that may explain the mechanics of this connection is Rupert Sheldrake's theory of formative causation. Sheldrake's (1981, 2005) theory of formative causation purports that organisms are dependent upon morphic fields in how they develop. In turn organisms also influence morphic fields which over time assume the collective behaviors of all organisms (Sheldrake, 1981, 2005). He argued that morphogenic fields, similar to invisible blueprints, contain all cumulative human experiences and through means of morphic resonance, influence each other's morphic fields to develop the organisms form (Sheldrake, 1981, 2005).

Sheldrake's (1981, 2005) theories help explain how organisms self-organize by taking on their shape and instinctive forms. The self-organizing principles occur at various levels, but the organisms are more than just the sum of its parts, and are also dependent upon the whole (Sheldrake, 1981, 2005). Some examples of morhpic fields that self-organize under Sheldrake's theory are: the development and maintenance of plants and animals; the organization of perceptions, behavior, and mental activity; and the

organization of societies and cultures. Sheldrake (1981) even postulates that this theory's

principles apply to the physical sciences as well as to biology and the social sciences. He

explains that measurements in the physical sciences appear to be governed by fixed laws

that have developed from established morphic fields that contain cumulative memories of

set patterns over time (Sheldrake, 1981).   According to Sheldrake (2005):

> Morphic fields contain a kind of memory.   Through repetition, the
> patterns they organize become increasingly probable, increasing habitual.
> The force these fields exert is the force of habit… All nature is essentially
> habitual. Even what we view as the fixed "laws of nature" may be more
> like habits, engrained over long periods of time.
> (p. 27)

Sheldrake (1981) acknowledges the biggest controversy about his theory is that morphic

fields evolve over time and that they contain cumulative memory.

Sheldrake's theory about morphic fields and resonance may help explain and

validate Carl Jung's theory of the primordial nature of the collective unconscious (Bolen,

2001; Sheldrake, 1981, 2005). Similar to Sheldrake's theory, Jung (1968) explains his

theory about the collective unconscious and how archetypes take form in our psyche, by

describing how the pattern of a crystal formulates. Jung (1998) states:

> It is necessary to point out once more that archetypes are not determined
> as regards their content, but only as regards their form and then only to a
> very limited degree. A primordial image is determined as to its content
> only when it has become conscious and is therefore filled out with the
> material of conscious experience. Its form…might perhaps be compared
> to the axial system of a crystal … the only thing that remains constant is
> the axial system, or rather, the invariable geometric proportions
> underlying it. The same holds true for the archetype. In principle, it can
> be named and has an invariable nucleus of meaning – but always only in
> principle, never as regards its concrete manifestation.
> (para. 155, pp. 89-80)

The crystal has no specific inherent coding to predetermine its shape; it instinctively

knows the form it will take (Jung, 1968). According to Sheldrake "Jung's notion of an

inherited collective unconscious containing archetypal forms could be interpreted as a kind of collective memory" (1981, p. 28). How the archetypal images are recognized collectively and where this capacity resides is still unresolved. Sheldrake's theory about morphic fields denotes an interesting analogy to the function of the collective unconscious.

Women who "activate" the crone archetype are described by Jean Shinoda Bolen (1994, 2001) as tapping into the morphic field and resonance of the crone archetype based on Sheldrake's theory. Bolen (1994, 2001) suggests that women who tune into the crone archetype and recognize the gifts the archetype, find a more powerful resonance and a deeper level with the crone archetype over time.

Professional Lenses

There are many professional experiences that have molded me and have created the underlying motivation for this research project. Most recently was my training and experience in Brazil as a Maryknoll lay missioner. Feminist methodology principles have been important for my research process, but it has been my professional experience with liberation theology, and Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, that has given me a foundational premise for my research focus. These theories blended together can empower people to uncover suppression and to overcome oppression. I have found these theories have been helpful in working with grassroots women's groups and in reclaiming the sacred feminine through ritual. My training in the holistic health field has taught me about the power of healing that comes from within us all. My prior professional experience in the finance field has revealed to me the economic realities of our world and women's place within these realities.

Training in liberation theology and critical pedagogy. A large part of my training with the Maryknoll Lay Mission Program focused on concepts about liberation theology and Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy. Both theories blended well together and became the underlying foundation for many social justice platforms in Latin America. In Brazil, were I spent almost six years, we lived in the region where both Paulo Freire and Leonardo Boff were born, and where their theories were promoted and practiced regularly within the social justice movements and other facets of society.

The Maryknoll community (priests, sisters, and lay missioners) focused on peace, justice, and advocacy for those most marginalized in society, digging at the roots of their poverty. One of my first positions was working at a youth center located in a shantytown next to the city dump called, Casa Pequeno Davi, named after the David and Goliath story from the Bible. I taught basic computer skills to youth using Paulo Freire's methodology. Under this method, my objective was to teach them only tools they could apply to their reality. The youth came from harsh realities, were malnourished, and had many learning disabilities. For these students, it was most effective to learn tasks they could use in their daily lives. For example, they learned to create signs for the family business or personal greeting cards, rather than computer programs typically taught in computer classes. Freire's theory to educating was to empower the student to learn in a way that they can best learn the subject matter.

I also used both Freire's and Gebara's methods to organize and train women during leadership workshops. These workshops educated the women about mental health, sexuality and spirituality on a grassroots level. The workshops created a framework for women to share their issues, become empowered to overcome their marginalization, and

to learn to speak out against the injustices that they experienced on a daily basis. They

realized that they had a voice and that their voice mattered.

The sacred feminine and ritual. Part of my other work as a Maryknoll lay

missioner, I participated in a spirituality group that did phenomenological research on

Christian women figures. This group consisted of religious sisters from Brazil and

Argentina, and other Brazilian lay women who had previously studied theology at the

seminary before women's participation was banned. Our first study together was about

the Virgin Mary, the Christian mother figure. We compared the Christian figure, Our

Lady of Conception, to Iemanjá, the Afro-Brazilian Orixa (deity) from Candomblé. Our

research concluded, that despite their similarities, the Virgin tended to carry negative

connotations of women's sexuality, while the Brazilian deity emphasized the importance

of being connected to the earth (Carvalho, Nunes, Ott, Gomés, Lopes de Oliveira,

Bertoldo, & Marinho, 2004). Upon completing this research, we had essentially

reclaimed part of the sacred feminine in ourselves that was represented by the mother

archetype, Iemanjá.

Another study we completed was about the Christian figure Mary Magdalene, who

is described in the Bible as the first follower and apostle of Jesus. However, there exists

many misinterpretations in Christian texts based on the Bible that imply Mary Magdalene

was a sinner and prostitute (Oliveira, Bertoldo, Carvalho, Ott, & Gomés, 2005). Another

example we uncovered was the false translation of wording from John 20:17 that

recorded Jesus in the garden commanding Mary Magdalene to not *touch* him, when in

fact the proper translation should be Jesus commanding her not to *cling* to him (Oliveira

et al., 2005). The translation is important as *to not touch* infers that Mary Magdalene was

unworthy, however, the translation *to not cling* to Jesus infers that she should let go of

him, but still have faith (Oliveira et al., 2005). In memory of Mary Magdalene, this

group created a Last Supper ritual to honor and bless women by washing each other's

feet, a sign of forgiveness and an act of humility; and anointing each other, honoring the

sacred feminine within each of us. Subsequent to this study, this ritual was celebrated

each year that helped us reclaim the story of Mary Magdalene.

      Our healing power within.   Another part of my experience in Brazil was studying

various holistic health methodologies at Afya Holistic Center for Women. Afya's

philosophy was to teach individuals to find and tap into the healing power they carried

within. I learned the therapeutic value of massage and the movement of energy within

our body from studying Reiki, both of which can illicit healing through universal energy.

I learned about the various energy vortexes of our body that are represented by the

charkas and how they impact our mental and spiritual states.   The integration of spirit,

mind, and body are necessary to maintain balance for optimum health. I learned that

charkas and Chinese meridians can provide us with information to rebalance where our

bodies have become unbalanced. My experience at Afya taught me the importance of

realigning to my body's wisdom and to listen to this wisdom as well. As a result of my

training in holistic health, I am open and accepting of concepts that are postulated by

Rupert Sheldrake (1981, 2005), connecting Jung's theory of the archetypes (1968) with

morphic resonance theory. In addition, Swimme and Berry's (1992) concept from their

book *The Universe Story,* demonstrates our connection to the earth and the importance of

its balance, and further pulls me towards a critical paradigm of doing research.

Western professionalism – burden of advancement for women. Prior to my experience in Brazil, my professional background was in the field of investment management as a research analyst and portfolio manager. I studied in great depth, the theories about efficient markets and capitalism principles. I achieved the designation of Chartered Financial Analyst, an arduous accreditation in the finance field. Today, these theories of capitalism seem to be the underlying driving force behind the Western worldview which influences the manner in which research is carried out across disciplines. However, despite learning to play by these market rules, it always seemed that the cards were stacked against me and advancement was difficult. As a woman, I learned that my compensation was less than that of my male counterparts, in spite of my greater education and experience. I was told I would be paid the going market rate for women, which was always less or about 70% of what men were paid. Women have certainly made inroads across many fields, however, even today they still are behind significantly in economic, political, and social representation.

A defining moment in my finance career occurred during an event when I realized the absurdity of continuing a career in which I had lost heart. I had this experience while attending the Securities Analysts of San Francisco year-end meeting, a trade-group representing my industry in a community where many prominent figures of investment portfolio theories resided. The keynote speaker was a protégé of the infamous international investor, George Soros, who had just come out with his own book *Investment Biker: Around the World with Jim Rogers.* What I thought was going to be a presentation on hot commodities and investment trends around the world, ended up being a slide show of his trip with his girlfriend, Tabitha, who was an ex-graduate student of his

at Columbia Business School.   This example demonstrated to me that there does not

seem to be a limit to what extent a woman's sexuality is utilized to benefit a man's world,

which greatly influences the Western positivist paradigm. I was burnt out in a field that

did not value women for their rightful capability, and I was not willing to keep jumping

over hurdles to reach for something that may never be attainable.

My experience in Brazil has given me a different perspective about my training in

the finance field and on the principles of capitalism. Outside the U.S., principles of

capitalism - such as privatization, free trade agreements, and market efficiencies - are

referred to as neoliberalism.   From the viewpoint of emerging or developing world

countries, they do not find the same level of participation in free-market economies as

does the U.S. Not everyone can be the dominating power that benefits from capitalism,

although the theory purports as such. Thomas Berry (1988) nervously ponders the

insatiable drive for progress and the expectation for GNP growth every year and deems

this expectation as unreasonable. Even more disturbing, is how most people are

oblivious to the consequences of such growth (Berry, 1988). I could never seem to

reconcile how infinite growth was expected and factored into profitability formulas, even

though we have limited recourses to work with.

There is much criticism outside the U.S. about neoliberalism. It is viewed as

taking away sovereignty from developing countries, promoting privatization when they

may need exactly the opposite. One example of this is how the World Bank has

promoted private investment for Brazil's agriculture while at the same time a large

portion of the Amazon forest has been eliminated as a result of multi-national cultivation

of soy, partly financed by the International Monetary Fund (Laden, Shipps, & Thompson,

2005). The destruction of the earth and its natural resources does not factor into the conscious actions that corporations take in their drive for ultimate profitability under the theory of neoliberalism. It can be argued that the world can be better served by promoting a balance on earth and holding neoliberalism more accountable. My training and experience under neoliberalism theories have nudged me to critically assess these theories and how they may influence the positivist paradigm of doing research.

Personal Lenses

My personal lenses are my own experiences that have greatly influenced me in selecting my research topic, how I have approached my research design, and my interpretations of the data. These influences have evolved in my subconscious over time, connecting and weaving together to create new understandings and form my perspective. My recent experience in Brazil revealed to me another culture's manner in which archetypal figures are presented in rich celebrations and customs. My perspective was enlightened about the role that archetypal images can take across cultures.

As a woman brought up in the Catholic Church, I have blossomed as a result of my faith and I have also been very challenged by the Church's distortion and denial of the sacred feminine. I also had an opportunity to attend a workshop regarding archetypes and women and to reclaim some of the old myths that honored the sacred feminine. It has been empowering for me to learn about the sacred feminine that has existed and was celebrated in ancient times.

One tool that has been extremely helpful for my personal development is learning about the Ennegram which has taught me to learn about the motivations behind my particular personality type. I recently studied about Christian women mystics at a

workshop and I found that I resonated with both the mystic's stories and the stories of the other women attending the workshop.

Archetypes come to life in Brazil. Many Brazilian customs and rituals I have experienced seem to bring life to archetypal images. Brazil's African influence has allowed syncretism to exist, such as Candomblé, which combines Catholic Saints with African deities in their religious practices. The African slaves that arrived in Brazil, brought with them their African myths, cultural beliefs, and Orixá deities. One example of this on December 8th during the day, a procession takes place in the streets to honor Our Lady of Immaculate Conception, the Virgin Mary. Later that evening, Brazilians flock to the beaches, dressed in white, to give homage to the Orixá Iemanjá, the mother figure. Every year I experienced the celebration to honor Iemanjá and I observed how the different Candomblé groups performed their rituals and made their offerings of flowers that they placed in the ocean in hope their prayers would be answered by Iemanjá.

Another Brazilian ritual that I experienced, which displayed many archetypal images was the *Noite dos Tambores Silenciosos* (the night of the silent drums). This ritual was in preparation for the Lenten period celebrated by the various maracatu groups of Northeastern Brazil. The maracatu groups are an outgrowth of the *caboclos* (African slave communities formed upon escaping enslavement) who generally worked on the sugar plantations in the Northeast of Brazil (Santos & Resende, 2005). From their tribal roots (Kings of Congo), they created rituals that adopted tribal images to fit the form of the royal court (Portuguese royalty), such as the king, queen, ladies, and knights with lances (Santos & Resende, 2005). The *Dama de Paço* (lady in waiting) was responsible for carrying the *calunga* doll, which represented the deity protector of that particular

maracatu group (Filho, 1999). Each maracatu group had its own unique drum beat, which represented the sacred rite and ethos of the community, and which evoked and honored their divine ancestors at the ritual *Noite dos Tambores Silenciosos* (Santos & Resende, 2005). On the evening of this ritual, Brazilians gathered along a narrow street that leads to the Church of *Nossa Sehnora do Rosário do Pretos* (Our Lady of the Black Rosary). The maracatu groups proceeded towards the church, beating their drums, while representatives of the court followed, dancing barefoot and in formation down the cobbled street. Upon reaching the church at midnight, the lights were extinguished; prayers were said to their deities, a dove was set free, and then one-by-one the maracatu groups exited down the street, completing the ritual. The maracatu ritual was very powerful for me to experience, especially their invocation of their deities, appeared to be deeply rooted in archetypal images.

The third Brazilian celebration that I experienced with archetypal flare was the corn harvest, which is celebrated in June to honor St. John the Baptist. The festival is called São João to celebrate the recent harvest, where everything imaginable is made from corn, and many folk dances are performed. On the eve of São João, bonfires are lit outside each house and a young couple on a donkey is paraded through town dressed as a wedding couple. This celebration is a fertility rite to give thanks for the current harvest and to ensure that the future harvest is bountiful as well. Brazilian women have shared with me stories about their ancestors, with tales of them crossing the hot coals of the bonfire in reverence to their faith to St. John the Baptist.

While I was living in Brazil, I attended a workshop in Chile about myths and archetypes sponsored by Con-spirando, an eco-feminist organization that focused on

spirituality and theology. This workshop was very powerful and revealed to me the

harmful myths that have been internalized by women. The workshop compared harmful

myths with ancient stories that affirmed the sacred feminine. I also experienced honoring

the "pacha mama" (mother earth) by chewing cocoa leaves in a ritual shared by

indigenous Aymara women from the Alti-Plano. The workshop focused on research

findings around the four principle archetypes: mother, warrior, lover, and wise-woman;

and the importance of ritualizing each of the archetypes. I think Judy Ress captures what

is at stake when the sacred feminine is denied by society: "when the feminine is not

present, honored in ritual, or in a culture's sacred image of the divine, the entire social

fabric is affected and violence against women becomes commonplace" (2006, p. 142).

Monotheistic religious traditions, and their patriarchal view, have set God above

and beyond us, where negative connotations are derived about our un-pure bodily

presence (Martin, 1993). For women, this has established original sin as an innate flaw,

leading women away from honoring the sacredness of creation in nature and within

ourselves (Martin, 1993). I have come to learn that it is necessary for women to identify

with the image of the feminine divine. The workshop regarding myths and archetypes

taught me many rituals that honor the sacred feminine. I carry them with me today.

Spiritual connection through ritual. I was raised a Catholic woman and have

long been challenged by the lack of honoring the sacred feminine by the Catholic

institution. I remember learning from the nuns at Catholic school when I was little that I

was created in the image of God. However, I could never reconcile the fact that I was a

female but God was male. As I grew older, I began to experience how woman do not

generally hold the same position and power in our culture and within the institution of the

Church as well. I realized that if God is man, than man becomes God. The sacred

feminine has long existed, but was denied for some reason to women. I later experienced

a few rituals that were powerful and honored my connection to the universe and the

sacred feminine inside of me.

There are two rituals that have grounded my spirituality and connection to the earth.

The first one is the Cosmic Walk ritual I experienced in Chile at the workshop I attended

about myths and archetypes. I believe the concept for the ritual was created from

Swimme and Berry's book *The Universe Story* (1992)*,* and may have been adapted from

a ritual done at the Genesis Farm in New Jersey. This ritual represents a spiraling forth

of the universe and it was very powerful. To walk the path of the universe, one begins at

the center core (the big bang) then continues along the spiraling journey that reveals life

formations evolving, setting the stage for vegetation, animal forms and human life. The

journey itself becomes part of the spiraling evolution, including those participating. The

Cosmic Walk reminded me of our relationship to the earth and universe and the

importance of honoring this connection by creating balance.

The other ritual that has brought great spiritual meaning to me is the celebration of

the Last Supper with women. The Last Supper is the story of Jesus sharing a meal with

his followers during which he humbly washes their feet, a symbol of forgiveness, and

blesses them by anointing them. With the women I knew in Brazil, it was important to

create the Last Supper ritual where women can humbly wash each other's feet (symbolic

of forgiveness), and bless and honor each other by anointing with oils (symbolic of the

sacred feminine). The Last Supper ritual with women was created in Brazil by a group of

women searching for the sacred feminine. Since experiencing it, I have re-created this ritual every year.

Awareness awakened. One tool that has been helpful for me in personal development was learning about the Enneagram. Part of the training at Maryknoll included learning about the Enneagram through several workshops. The Enneagram represents nine personality types that can provide each individual with self-understanding about their own type (Riso & Hudson, 1999). Key to each personality type is the underlying motivations that drive our actions, and especially the negative aspects of the personality, the shadow side or the side of us we do not like (Riso & Hudson, 1999). According to the Ennegram personality type, both positive and negative aspects can bring about awareness to choose consciously and avoid destructive behavioral patterns (Riso & Hudson, 1999). The Ennegram has been very helpful for me to understand my own motivations and it has provided me with great insights about myself. As typical of my Enneagram type, I find that truth is extremely important to me, whether I uncover new knowledge, or with respect to relationships. Part of the shadow side of my type is the fear of not having the following: belonging to a group or connecting, security, or finding inner guidance from within. It seems the shadow side is where we learn the most about ourselves, and from this point, is where we can become aware and be transformed in some manner.

Workshop about women mystics. During my research process, I participated in a workshop that studied various Christian women mystics. The book we read was *Mystics, Visionaries & Prophets: A Historical Anthology of Women's Spiritual Writings* (1998) edited by Shawn Madigan, C.S.J. Some of the most intriguing women mystics we talked

about in this workshop were Brigit of Ireland, Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, and Edwina Gateley. In conjunction with this study, we reviewed the working experiential definitions of mysticism as defined by Mathew Fox in his book *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ* (1988). In Fox's definition of mysticism, there are some characteristics that I resonate with the most about the mystics: acting out of the true-self, self-critical, and acknowledging the shadow side; panentheistic – all universal, divine is within not outside of us, connection making, and the world as a whole; return to the source of divinity and psychic justice as prophetic; and non-dualistic – see unity not separation, contrary to Western thought. The most powerful experience for me during this workshop was to hear the other women share their experiences that they resonated with about the mystics we were studying.

Method

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the method and research orientation used for this research, the rationale for this method, and the procedures utilized to carry out the methodology. To describe the lived experience of a phenomenon is the study of phenomenology. For this research, the culture of inquiry (research orientation), is described by borrowing the terminology of excavation from DeVault (1999), who defines it as uncovering what already exists underneath. On the surface it seems sufficient to describe my culture of inquiry as phenomenology, however, it is necessary to excavate deeper under the surface to be able to explain the lived experiences of women and from their perspective. I have used the metaphor of a three-pronged fork to explain my research culture of inquiry. The first prong represents the process of excavating to a deeper layer, from phenomenology, to an ethnographic slant, to organic inquiry. The second prong addresses the feminist critique of phenomenology, where researchers argue the need to go deeper to understand the actual lived experiences of a phenomenon from a woman's perspective and in her voice; and which is not anchored to a positivist paradigm (DeVault, 1999; Cruikshank, 2003; Fisher, 2000; Hesse-Biber, 2007; Thomason, 2006). The third prong represents the process of excavating deeper to arrive at key feminist ethnographic principles that are necessary in doing research about women and to avoid the issues of anchoring research to a positivist viewpoint (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross, 2007; Smith, 2007). Finally, the fork itself vibrates and reverberates across the three-prongs, and therefore is symbolic of an organic inquiry philosophy that takes into consideration the psycho-spiritual nature of my research, and the impact to the whole

research process, not just the methodology (Clements, 2002, 2004; Clements el al.,

1998a, 1998b).

To answer my research question, the most appropriate tool is in-depth interviews.

Feminist researchers see interviews as the best manner to capture the lived experience of

women from their perspective and in their voice (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross,

2007; Hesse-Biber, 2007; Hesse-Leavy, 2006; Holstein & Minkler, 2003; Levesque-

Lopman, 2000). In addition, when exploring a phenomenon that is generally subjective

in nature, and not a topic generally covered in research, individual interviews under

organic inquiry philosophy are an ideal tool for the method (Curry & Wells, 2006).

I developed selection procedures to recruit and choose the appropriate women for

interviewing. Some of the procedures included such factors as the relationship of the

researcher and participant, creating a set of criteria for selecting the women who were

recruited, and the use of informants to help recruit. Guidelines and procedures were

established for the interviews, reflecting key feminist principles for the tools utilized in

this method. Certain steps under organic inquiry were used for data collection procedures

and data analysis procedures that were designed under the framework of preparation,

inspiration, and integration (Clements, 2002, 2004). Finally this method chapter touches

on important ethical considerations, especially for doing research about older women,

and covers some limitations of the research design for organic inquiry.

Rationale for Method

The culture of inquiry is a way of doing research that sets the stage and tone for

what methodology is utilized. From this framework, culture of inquiry is a rationale and

research orientation, which employs a set of tools and methodologies that are based on

certain assumptions about creating new knowledge in the process of the research (Bentz

& Shapiro, 1998). The lived experience of women should not be differentiated from the

male perspective, but from her perspective. Simone de Beauvoir's quote from her book

The Second Sex demonstrates what is at stake in selecting the appropriate culture of

inquiry and methodology that represents the lived experience of women from their voice

and in their way of knowing.

> Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as
> relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being…For him she
> is sex – absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with
> reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the
> inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the
> absolute – she is the other. (1952, pp. xviii, xxiii)

At the heart of what Beauvoir is suggesting is that women and their experiences

should be defined from their perspective and not anchored to the male's point of view.

As my research purpose states, it does not seem logical to describe how women

"activate" the crone archetype and what this means to them from a male researcher's

perspective. Feminist phenomenologists argue that conventional research methodologies

generally do not address the lived experience of women from their perspective and in

their voice.

Phenomenology is greatly influenced by a positivist paradigm worldview, which

sets research standards as rational, objective, and hierarchal in nature and therefore a

critical approach to research is necessary (DeVault, 1999; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

Bentz and Shapiro (1998) define positivism as:

> The adoption of a rather limited notion of the scientific method as not only
> a prescription for conducting research and producing scientific knowledge
> but a comprehensive worldview, social ideology, and definition of the
> meaning of life – [and] is an important force in the history of modern

culture and, in particular, in the history of intellectual life and research. (p. 26-27)

Feminist researchers argue that the positivist research paradigm can influence research outcomes that subsequently affect women in a negative way (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross, 2007; Fisher, 2000; Hesse-Biber 2007). The pursuit of creating knowledge not truly based on the lived experience of women from their perspective is unethical (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross, 2007; Fisher, 2000; Hesse-Biber 2007).

In her book *Liberating Method: Feminism and Social Research* (1999), DeVault argues that the basis for feminist research is to criticize the means by which traditional methods construct knowledge which has perpetuated the oppression of women. She proposes criteria for feminist research that uses the tool of excavation:

> Feminists seek a methodology that will do the work of "excavation," shifting the focus of standard practice from men's concerns in order to reveal the locations and perspectives of (all) women; Feminists seek a science that minimizes harm and control in the research process; Feminists seek a methodology that will support research of value to women, leading to social change or action beneficial to women.
> (DeVault, 1999, pp. 30-31)

From these criteria, DeVault finds a new foundation for feminist research. DeVault uses the excavation, as a metaphor to emphasize the importance of uncovering the lived experiences of women from their perspective and voice. The excavation brings about awareness while addressing ethical considerations.

I employed DeVault's (1999) concept of excavation in my research methodology using the metaphor of a three-pronged fork. With this fork, each prong represents a concept that requires digging multiple layers. The prongs are firmly connected and therefore influence each other. If one vibrates, the others will be influenced and vibrate in unison. The metaphor of the fork and its three separate prongs are connected and

influence each other, which sets the stage and tone for my research. This metaphor helps conceptualize multiple principles that weave together and address critical issues in my research methodology also captured by Simone de Beauvoir's quote.

The first prong - excavation to culture of inquiry. The first prong of the three-pronged fork reflects the culture of inquiry most appropriate for my research purpose as feminist ethnographic phenomenology combined with organic inquiry. Bentz and Shapiro (1998) describe phenomenology as a culture of inquiry that focuses on understanding the lived experience of some phenomena, to generate knowledge on how people experience specific phenomena, and outside the limitations of society or its intellectual knowledge. Feminist's critique of phenomenology is that it is based on standards, which are considered the norm but does not reflect the lived experience of women (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross, 2007; Hess-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

One layer deeper within the first prong there is a type of phenomenology called ethnography which pays special attention to beliefs and values of a culture, group or system (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Ethnographers are interested in creating rich descriptions by learning about a particular population's worldview, how they experience life through their eyes, and what meaning their customs have for them (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). It is important for the researcher, as an outsider, to be welcomed into the culture to some extent, so as to be able to extract valuable information, which is freely shared by the people.

Although feminist ethnographic phenomenology as a culture of inquiry employs principles that are appropriate for my research, further excavation is necessary to encompass the psycho-spiritual nature of my research. Women who "activate" the crone

archetype are tapping into their psyche at a level that brings meaning to their identity. Organic inquiry assumes that everything is sacred and connected (Clements, 2004; Curry & Wells, 2006). Therefore, it provides a grounded platform and practical steps that apply the methodology to the entire research process (Clements, 2004). Ultimately this is influenced by the psycho-spiritual nature that impacts the researcher, the researched and the research outcome (Clements, 2004).

According to William Braud (2004), "this approach is best suited for topics that have a transpersonal or spiritual dimension" (p.22) and where the researcher has experience and passion relating to the topic. Organic inquiry is holistic in nature in that it focuses on aspects of the body, mind, and spirit to do research (Braud, 2004; Clements, 2004). In this holistic approach other ways of knowing are just as important, such as emotions, feelings, sensing, and intuiting, which become part of the entire research process (Braud, 2004; Clements, 2004). In this respect, organic inquiry represents the vibrating fork as well as part of the first prong.

Second prong - feminist methodology critical perspective across disciplines. In order to fully understand and rationalize the feminist critique in methodology for this culture of inquiry, it is important to critically look at each of the discipline areas of this research that are influenced by the positivist research paradigm: gerontology, psychology and psycho-spirituality. This is especially important in that it is widely accepted as the norm in conventional research and influences research outcomes that involve the phenomena of women's lived experiences. This is the second prong of the three-pronged fork.

Feminist researchers argue that traditional research does not critically assess issues regarding women in the social sciences (Cruikshank, 2003; Holstein & Minkler, 2003; Thomason, 2006; Ray, 2004). In the field of gerontology, feminists argue that the study of aging is inherently influenced by positivist principles that lack critical research efforts about women's lived experiences based on their own perceptions; these principles are generally linked towards societal norms about women that do not match their actual experiences (Fisher, 2000; Levesque-Lopman, 2000). Similarly, Hesse-Biber (2007) points out that the positivist worldview erroneously treats the male sex role as the norm and in some cases anchors differences from this norm as inferior and statistically innate.

For example, in the field of psychology the phenomena of archetypes and Jung's theory of the collective unconscious are not uniformly accepted by conventional research. The research generally acknowledges that the phenomena of the collective unconscious exists, however the controversial issue becomes whether the phenomenon is innate or not; arguing this point seems to anchor the research towards a positivist view (Goodwyn, 2010; McDowell, 2001). Hopcke (1989) points out that even though Jung's theories were continuously thought to be speculative and unscientific, in Jung's opinion these theories had empirical evidence that supported them scientifically. My observation is that the focus of the research about this phenomenon of the archetypes is generally anchored towards this debate and not the study of the actual lived experience of individuals of this phenomenon.

In the field of gerontology, the widely accepted model of "successful aging" or the question of "what is normal aging?" does not generally examine differences in aging by gender or social marginalization as a phenomenon that greatly influences the lived

experience (Cruikshank, 2003; Holstein and Minkler, 2003; Thomason, 2006; Ray, 2004). Holstein and Minkler (2003) argue that there are many ways of knowing for which the actual lived experiences can provide depth not readily available from traditional scientific point of view based on the positivist paradigm.

> Why we age as we do and how we might experience a happier, healthier, and satisfying old age will always be questions in search of answers. How these questions are framed, what sources of knowledge are accepted in seeking answers, and what answers are considered satisfactory demarcates critical from positivistic approaches to studying aging and old age. (pp. 789-790)

The lived experiences of older women give voice and dimension to their perspective which is different than what is defined as the model of successful aging (Cruikshank, 2003; Holstein and Minkler, 2003; Thomason, 2006; Ray, 2004).

One of the main criticisms of research in the field of psycho-spirituality is that research tends to set pre-determined outcomes. Jennett, one of the creators of Organic Inquiry, states:

> It's also clear to me that many of the classic researchers or even the feminist researchers still have an idea about what they are going to find before they find it. They set out to prove something, which seems completely the opposite of what we are doing.
> (Clements, et al., 1998, p. 116)

Although conventional research in phenomenology sets down parameters that emphasize objectivity, the research outcomes are within a design that quite often produces the results the researcher is seeking. Organic inquiry sets out from the very beginning to avoid this. The focus is on transparency within pre-established procedures that guide, but do not control the research process (Clements, 2002, 2004; Curry & Wells, 2006).

The arguments for a critical feminist methodology, in contrast to the positivist approach of research, is the basis to establishing key principles that are practical and can

be applied to my research process. A critical feminist phenomenology across all disciplines that apply to this research is necessary and becomes an ethical issue that influences the entire research process, not just the methodology. This leads to the third prong of the three-pronged fork.

Third prong - principles of feminist ethnographic phenomenology. The third prong of the three-pronged fork of excavation focuses on describing specific feminist principles that are appropriate for my research methodology. Each of these principles lay grounding foundation and reverberate ethical considerations throughout my research process, not just the methodology. There are seven principles of feminist ethnographic phenomenology that I utilized.

The first principle is based on the concept of studying woman's experience, which needs to be expressed from her perspective and in her voice. Sociologist Dorothy Smith (2007) explains that feminist ethnographic research begins with women's lived experiences that are different than what is considered the norm in research. Quite often phenomenology reflects presupposed assumptions that are based on positivist principles (Smith, 2007). Smith sees women themselves as the ultimate bearers of knowledge and points out that they are not typically aware of this until they begin to discuss it. According to Smith (2007), the ethnographic process uncovers an invisible map of sorts, which brings about awareness of connections not previously known of the lived experience. My objective is to describe how women "activate" the crone archetype through their own experiences, from their perspective, and in their voices.

The second principle pays close attention to the hierarchal relationships between the researcher over the participant. Within this relationship, who carries the power will

influence women's responses, because women's issues are generally rooted in power differentials (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross, 2007; Fisher, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Women who are marginalized in some manner generally feel their subordinate position is because of their lack of power. Feminist research attempts to dispel the power relationship by encouraging the researcher to level their power position with the participant to some degree (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The relationship between the researcher and members of the culture of study is essential to providing a safe space for sharing knowledge and creating understanding (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross, 2007; Hess-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Levesque-Lopman, 2000). Feminist researchers argue that interviewers should be from the same culture or share considerable characteristics and background with the interviewees that they are researching (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). My goal is to minimize my position of power by emphasizing transparency and authenticity in my research process.

A third feminist ethnographic phenomenology principle recognizes that knowledge can be presented in different manners, which are not always addressed in research methodologies (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross, 2007; Levesque-Lopman, 2000). Emotions are important aspects of women's lives and bring forth great meanings. The research analysis should include non-verbal communication as part of gathering data (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross, 2007; Levesque-Lopman, 2000). DeVault (1999) describes the non-verbal communication as "subtle shades of meaning conveyed through the nuances of speech, gesture, and expression…uses of silence" (p. 173). These forms of communication are just as important as those communicated verbally.

The fourth principle relates to the empowerment of our own knowing. Smith (2007) argues that women are the key to their own knowledge. In echoing this view, Hesse-Biber (2007) demonstrates that "it is a woman's oppressed location within society that provides fuller insights into society as a whole; women have access to an enhanced and more nuanced understanding of social reality than men do precisely because of their structurally oppressed location" (p. 10). This concept was also central to Paulo Freire's theory of critical pedagogy and in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2003), he argued that knowledge comes from within and just needs to be tapped into. He believed that it is those in the position of the oppressed (or he described as an internalized inferiority) understand their oppression, but the oppressor does not. Freire argued that through the experiences of the oppressed, they alone have the capacity to unleash themselves from such oppression. The oppressor does not understand the culture of the oppressed and therefore will not see the oppression nor take action to change it. Similarly, women who have internalized negative myths created by society about the elderly (e.g. hag, ugly, decrepit) are the key to eliminating their own oppression through their own knowledge of their lived experiences.

The fifth principle relates to social justice or the researchers activist role, which is to promote ethical justice. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006), ethnographic research quite often takes on a social justice role, whereby the researcher focuses on dispelling the power structure that may oppress a particular culture. Feminist researchers attempting to understand in-dept issues that are pertinent to women, especially in bringing about awareness of hidden oppressions, find that ethnography addresses many of the critiques of traditional phenomenology (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). DeVault

criticizes the desired outcome of research whereby the "standard practice in sociology makes knowledge *of* [women], knowledge that fixes and pacifies its objects in order to bring them into the purview of ruling regime…[rather than] knowledge *for* women" (1999, p. 47). It becomes an ethical consideration whereby the researcher assumes an activist role that addresses the concept that knowledge is for women, in contrast to objectifying women by creating knowledge about women that then reflects a political agenda (Smith, 2007). DeVault (1999) points out that personal testimony from women can uncover what has been suppressed or previously ignored and bring about a new awareness for women that is empowering for them. The creation of new knowledge can be empowering for both the women, who are the subjects of the research, as well as the researcher (Levesque-Lopman, 2000; Smith, 2007).

The sixth principle addresses the appropriation and the dissemination of knowledge. As part of ethics and accountability, feminist ethnographic researchers are sensitive to the issue of formulating knowledge (research outcomes) as a result of their research, commonly referred to as appropriation and dissemination of knowledge (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2007; Smith, 2007). According to DeVault (1999) ways in which research has created scientific knowledge regarding women has been harmful and maintained systematic oppression against them. Careful attention needs to be extracted to create meaning of the research data, because it is ultimately the researcher who conceptualizes this through her research conclusions; in contrast to reflecting the actual experience of the subjects in their voices (DeVault, 1999).

The seventh principle relates to how research can bring about awareness and transformation for all parities connected to the research. Smith (2007) views feminist

ethnographic research as bringing conscious awareness to women's issues. She argues

that research denotes women as the object and alienates them from their own experiences

(Smith, 2007). One example of this has been the challenge that physicians who have

found themselves trained by scientific birthing knowledge that is socially constructed,

and not always been cognizant of the actual lived experience of women and birthing

(Levesque-Lopman, 2000).

The vibrating fork - organic inquiry principles. The vibrating fork is a metaphor

that represents the philosophy of organic inquiry, which reverberates upon each of the

individual prongs. Organic inquiry focuses on excavation, or uncovering knowledge that

already exists, from the psycho-spiritual realm of research. The creators of organic

inquiry developed five rooted foundations, which are applied to the entire research

process and are referred to as: sacred, personal, chthonic (Greek for "in the earth"),

relational, and transformational (Clements, 2004; Clements, et al., 1998a,1998b; Curry &

Wells, 2006).

There is a sacred concept in organic inquiry which is grounded in ethical

responsibility of honoring all parties in the research (Clements, 2004; Clements et al.,

1998a, 1998b; Curry & Wells, 2006). The personal concept refers to the researcher's

experience of the topic, and essentially becomes the springboard and container for which

the research is designed, and from where the researcher finds meaning from the results

(Clements, 2002, 2004; Clements, et al., 1998a, 1998b; Curry & Wells, 2006; Shillington,

2004). As the researcher, Clements (2004) explains "one's own psyche becomes the

'instrument' as one works subjectively in partnership with liminal and spiritual sources,

as well as with participants who are able to relate their stories of the experience being studied" (p. 27).

Shillington (2004) utilized the organic inquiry method in her research and describes the chthonic concept as "the manner in which the research process evolves" (p. 50) and is not dependent upon a rigid framework of controls. The creators of this method describe the research process as dynamic, not fixated with restricting research parameters, but rather utilizing insights and synchronicities that uncover great research discoveries – the wisdom of the research itself (Clements, 2002, Clements et al., 1998a). The chthonic element leads the researcher from a power within, similar to the concept that Angeles Arrien (1993) describes as "what has heart has meaning". This is the researcher's driving motivation behind the research design. The chthonic element puts immense value to tapping into intuitive ways of knowing, synchronicities that have meaning, and to our conscious outside the ego carrying with it ethics of virtue (Shillington, 2004).

The relational concept of organic inquiry refers to both the researcher and the participants who share experiences relating to the topic of research (Clements, 2004; Clements et al., 1998a; Curry & Wells, 2006; Shillington, 2004). It is a reciprocal relationship, an exchange of experiences and knowledge which are shared between all parties of the research – researcher, participant, and reader (Clements, 2004). The last concept in organic inquiry is transformational whereby the researcher, participant, and reader are awakened to new concepts which has resonated with their lived experiences and has now given them new insights (Clements, 2002, 2004; Clements et al. 1998a; Curry & Wells, 2006). Clements (2002) argues that "to truly experience another's story requires the willingness to be altered by it" (p. 22). Researcher's insights come from

relating their own experiences as well as those of the participants, and thus any biases are more transparent (Clements, 2004; Shillington, 2004). Therefore, as researchers we become changed once we resonate with another's experience to the point that we find new awareness and meaning.

In practice, Clements (2002, 2004) suggests utilizing a three-step approach, repeatedly throughout the research process, that helps focus and gives a framework for the researcher in the organic inquiry discipline, preparation, inspiration and integration. The whole research process, as recommended by Clements (2002, 2004), at every juncture utilizes the organic three-step approach while maintaining the underlying foundational characteristics (sacred, personal, chthonic, relational, transformative). Preparation requires intentional openness during the entire research process. Clements (2002, 2004) breaks her preparation into several tasks. The researcher needs to be aware and acknowledge the task at hand at any juncture of the research process. The ego may want to resolve something with an immediate answer, but waiting to find an answer is being open to the eventual outcome. This task requires awareness of the ego wanting to control the process and Clements (2004) suggests allowing "a state of curious ignorance" (p. 36). It is important to honor the process, accepting and giving reverence to oneself, as well as any other party subject to the research process. One exceptional example of the concepts of reverence and letting go of the ego is from psychologist McFadden (Ray & McFadden, 2001). In describing the rigorous and grueling tasks of her research, she finds herself reciting her favorite prayer "help me, help me, help me [and] thank you, thank you, thank you" (Ray & McFadden, 2001, p.207), which I too have chanted throughout my research process and found helpful.

Another important task is "opening of the psyche to liminal experience" (Clements, 2004, p.34), which helps prepare the researcher for the second step of inspiration. According to Jungian psyche typology, different ways of knowing come from the functions - thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuiting – of which bring us great insights if we become aware of these functions outside the control of the ego (Braud, 2004; Clements, 2002, 2004; Clements et al., 1998a). Conventional research does not typically allow for liminal experiences and Clements argues that the researcher needs to adapt a radically different attitude to letting go of the ego's control (Clements, 2002, 2004). Although there may be much skepticism about the knowledge created from liminal experiences, Clements (2004) states "to the transpersonal scientist, what is real includes not only that which is physical and that which exists as inner experience, but also, that which may originate in non-egoic states of consciousness" (p. 32). Clements (2004) points out some ways to assist in entering liminal space and to tapping into other ways of knowing. These consist of: forms of meditation or contemplation, the use of stories, paying attention to feelings or non-verbal communications, rituals or movement techniques, recognizing coincidental events or synchronicities, and listening to one's intuition.

The tasks done in the preparation step naturally prepares one to enter the second step of Clements three-step approach to organic inquiry, which is inspiration (Clements, 2002, 2004). In the inspiration step, researchers become open to the liminal experience and the different ways in which to arrive at new knowledge and insights. Clements (2004) states the following step "the researcher steps over the threshold into the liminal realm in search of inspiration" (p. 36). The researcher may put together different links

experienced from the liminal space, through meditation, from feelings, synchronicities, or other conventional sources as well - almost as though putting a puzzle together. These are the roots that emerge from the chthonic process of allowing the research to evolve, engaging the researcher as part of the research process and laying out the foundation for transformation (Clements et al., 1998a).

Integration is the final step of Clements's three-step process for organic inquiry and it blends together cognitive research findings with those from liminal experiences, engaging the ego to synthesize the research together. "The researcher's transformative changes can serve as a model or trigger for similar changes in the reader/audience" (Braud, 2004, p. 21). The integration step synthesizes the insights learned, which can be moments of change of heart and mind, and examines the meaning, blending them together to create new knowledge or a new perspective of understanding (Clements, 2002, 2004). The research containing new insights, now creates a forum for awareness and space for transformation for all parties of the research – researcher, participants, and readers along with society as a whole.

The research process for organic inquiry employs Clements's three-step process at various junctures throughout the research project - preparation, inspiration, and integration – helping to keep the underlying principles of this methodology grounded. Using this integrative approach to research, the vibrating fork organic inquiry, sets the foundation for this research while incorporating principles of feminist ethnographic phenomenology and a platform for psycho-spiritual research.

Method tool. The feminist critical viewpoint subsequently established the need for a different set of research principles that are not anchored to a positivist paradigm and

also apply to the tools utilized to carry out the methodology. Audre Lorde (a writer, poet

and activist) expresses the dilemma of using tools based on a patriarchal foundation that

can only understand the phenomena of women's lived experiences in the narrowest sense

from her quote:

> What does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarch are used to examine
> that same patriarchy? It means that only the most narrow perimeters of
> change are possible. (as cited in DeVault, 1999, p. 46)

If women do not participate in the same manner as men do in a patriarchal system, they

will not have the same lived experiences or the same perspectives as men. Just the same,

research tools that are anchored to a positivist viewpoint cannot effectively understand a

phenomenon that is based on a women's perspective. To describe the lived experience of

women who "activate" the crone archetype, from their perspective, and in their voice, I

have used the research tool of in-depth interviews. Organic inquiry allows for the

excavation of the psycho-spiritual nature of this research.

An in-depth interview emphasizes the feminist principle of extracting the actual

experience from the women's perspective and in their voice, outside from any influence

of ideals from culture or the researcher (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross, 2007; Hess-

Biber, 2007; Hesse-Leavy, 2006; Holstein & Minkler, 2003; Levesque-Lopman, 2000).

The interview itself is an excavation, whereby rich descriptions and meaning regarding a

phenomenon are uncovered (DeVault, 1999). The process of listening can establish a

level of hearing of a new concept or meaningful insight that may lead to empowerment

for both the researcher and interviewee (DeVault & Gross, 2007). It is the "interaction

between the interviewer and interviewee that establishes mutuality, and nourishes recall

of the seen-but-not-noticed, revealing to the knower what she knows, possibly for the

first time in her own words and from her own perspective" (Levesque-Lopman, 2000, p.103).

Throughout the interview, non-traditional forms of communication, such as non-verbal cues, provide information that can later be part of analyzing the data, such as in the example of facial expressions, body movements, and long pauses, etc. (DeVault, 1999). The interview process is not a one-way asking and receiving – women tend to relate more to "woman talk" and therefore, the interview can lend itself to a conversation slant to facilitate in-dept responses (DeVault, 1999). Besides this, the researcher can set the stage for a safe atmosphere of sharing by giving appropriate responses at the right moment, such as laughing, showing sympathy, or acknowledgment that the researcher has heard the interviewee (Levesque-Lopman, 2000).

Selection Procedures

There are several factors that went into the process of selecting participants for my research. The factors most important to my selection process were the relationship of the researcher to the participant and selecting women that already identify with a crone archetypal image. In addition, other factors included the actual selection process known as convenience samples with snow-ball sampling, the use of informants for this process, and final selection criteria used for choosing participants from the pool of women. The relationship of the researcher and participant was important in order to create a safe place where the women felt free to share. It was necessary to find women participants who were knowledgeable about my research topic and who could best answer the research question. I found the best tool to recruit participants was to use convenience samples with snow-ball sampling, whereby I enlisted informants to recruit women. These

informants were told about my research purpose, and therefore understood what was

necessary to recruit women participants with special knowledge regarding my topic. My

informants effectively provided a buffer in which participants did not feel coerced by the

researcher to participate and ensured that their participation was voluntary. Guidelines

were established ahead of time to make the best final selections from a pool of women

candidates.

Relationship of researcher/participant. The first factor that was important to my

selection process was to evaluate the relationship I held with the women candidates

interested in being interviewed about the crone archetype. Hesse-Biber and Leavey

(2006) suggest it is important to select participants that are knowledgeable about the topic

and are willing to share their experiences in a way that it is meaningful for them as well.

In selecting participants, the relationship between the researcher and participant is key to

creating a safe space for sharing (Clements, 2002, 2004; Clements et al., 1998a). Psycho-

spiritual research is a highly personal topic and often interviewed participants are

personal colleagues of the researcher (Clements, 2002, 2004; Clements et al., 1998a).

Clements' (2002; 2004) research has demonstrated that when dealing with intimate

topics, individuals will tend to participate only if they have some personal connection to

the researcher. Participants desire an atmosphere that is safe for sharing and some

assurance that the researcher is trustworthy (Clements, 2002, 2004; Clements et al.,

1998a; Curry & Wells, 2006). Trust is built by the researcher through disclosure, "when

you identify your particular interest, establish safety for the topic and thereby avoid

wasting precious interview time" (Clements, 2002, p. 149). As the researcher, I felt it

was my ethical responsibility to remain transparent. In an effort to do so, I disclosed my

research purpose, intent, and personal background on the flyer for recruiting participants, as well as on the consent form and during the interview process. Therefore, my relationship as researcher with participants focused on creating a relationship built on trust. Some of the women selected for interviews were acquaintances and others were not personally known to me. To create a relationship of trust from the onset, each of these women recruited through my informants were advised of my research focus, my background, and were provided with underlying motivations for doing this research.

Crone women participants. The crone archetype represents older women and gives meaning to the final part of their life (Bolen, 2001; Walker, 1996). Women who identify with a crone image have essentially "activated" the crone archetype to some degree (Bolen, 1994, 2001). Women over 50 years old are generally considered entering the latter stage of their life (Northrup, 1996). Therefore, I recruited and selected older women who were already knowledgeable about and to some extent identified to the crone archetype.

Selection tools and process. Convenience samples with snow-ball sampling is a selection tool that typically uses informants "who can serve as guides to provide information concerning the research…who has some specialized knowledge of the setting, and who is willing to serve in that role" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 71). Participants have special knowledge about the topic and are selected through colleagues and personal connections who are my informants. The informants I used were aware of my research purpose and the importance of participants having special knowledge relating to my research topic. These connections also served as a buffer, giving participants freedom to agree or decline to participate without feeling coerced. Potential

participants were provided with a flyer describing my research purpose, intent, and

background and given instructions to notify me if they were interested in participation

(see Appendix A). My informants distributed my flyers to women that they felt were

good candidates. Interested participants contacted me directly, without the informant

taking part in the selection process. Upon selection, they were sent a consent form to

review and a time for the interview was set up.

 Identifying my informants. I used five separate informants that distributed my

flyers to possible candidates. The flyer (see Appendix A) explained my research purpose

and motivation behind doing the research, as well as summarized what was expected of

participants. I originally used three informants to distribute my flyers and added two

other informants later in my process. I had anticipated that through the initial three

informants that I would have had a large enough pool to select between five to seven

participants to interview. However, the women were slow to respond to the flyers during

the December holiday time period and therefore, I added two more informants to ensure a

selection pool sufficient to meet my goals.

 My procedures were designed to avoid coercing women to participate. Each of

my informants followed the same procedures. Flyers were distributed to each of my

informants through hard copies or through email. Subsequently they were distributed

directly to women who were considered most appropriate. I specifically instructed the

informant to only distribute my flyers, emphasizing that interested women contact me

directly, that they not request responses from these women or to get involved in the

selection process. The women, who were interested in participation contacted me

directly expressing their interest without the informant being aware of their decision. The women who contacted me directly were included in the selection pool.

My first informant is the director of a women's wellness center who leads and participates in a group of women who identify specifically with crone archetypal images. A colleague, known from mutual participation in a women's drum group, referred me to this informant. Therefore, this was an example of the snow-ball effect of convenience sampling where a colleague provided me the connection to this informant. This informant distributed my flyers to the women in the group. This particular informant was also a participant in the crone group. Although she was my informant, she specifically stated her desire to participate in my study. Because of the nature of her position, I did not feel she was at risk of being coerced and was therefore included in the selection pool of candidates. This situation was unique with this informant and I felt she could potentially provide rich information in describing the "activation" process of the crone.

My second informant is a woman I have known for several years as leader of my Celtic drum group. She is very knowledgeable about my topic of research and was a good resource to distribute my flyers in order to recruit participants. In my relationship to this informant there was the potential that I would know some of the women recruited. However, the same process was used with this informant to avoid possible coercion. The third informant was a colleague from my graduate program who was aware of my research topic and offered herself as an informant. My fourth informant is a colleague from Brazil who was knowledgeable about the context of my research and knew a few women that she thought might be good candidates. My fifth informant is a family relation who was familiar with my research project and thoroughly understood my

research purpose. She distributed my flyers to several women colleagues that she felt

might fit my research focus. Regardless of her relationship to me, I followed the same

procedures with her as I did with all the other informants.

Selection criteria. The women who had received flyers from my informants and

who were interested in participating contacted me directly via email, telephone, or direct

personal contact. I subsequently included them in the selection pool to determine the

five or seven participants whom I would select to interview. After initial contact I

immediately initiated dialogue about my research topic. I emailed my research purpose

to each of the women and described what was expected of them. I also sent out a consent

form (see Appendix B) for them to review and left room for their questions and concerns.

I specifically requested information regarding the crone archetypal image that they

identified with. This was to help me determine if they were a good fit for my research

purpose of which was to describe women who "activate" the crone archetype. I received

responses from eleven women who were interested in participating in my research.

Therefore, it was necessary for me to use screening criteria to select only the desired

number of women, between five to seven total participants. The women who were not

chosen were invited to the final presentation of this research project.

According to Clements (2002, 2004), the screening criteria can help validate

selections that best fit the psycho-spiritual nature of the research topic. I developed a

selection guide that helped me select five to seven candidates. My selection guide

considered the following: some level of rapport with the participant and researcher, a

relationship of the researcher and participant that was based on trust, the participant had

significant knowledge about the crone and had identified with a crone archetypal image

to some extent, diversity represented by women who identified with different crone images, and lastly selected participants who had differing relationships to me as the researcher.

Seven out of eleven women were selected for interviews. Of those not chosen, there was one woman who did not meet the selection guide criteria because she did not identify with a crone archetypal image. Two of the other women were not interviewed because of scheduling issues. Another woman was eliminated because of a conflict of interest.

Guidelines for Interviews

There are several procedures that were followed in carrying out the individual interviews with the women and in analyzing the data. The methodology used was based on organic inquiry principles. According to organic inquiry, the researcher becomes the container through which the research methodology is carried out (Clements, 2002, 2004). Clements describes the researcher's psyche as the instrument through which the results are filtered and to how outcomes are integrated within the research. In addition, it is important to demonstrate the procedures I followed as the researcher, as well as the specific steps taken to interviewing the seven women.

Part of the interviewing process included preparing an interview guide that was well thought out ahead of time. This guide was sent to the women prior to the interview. The procedures followed for interviewing were the same for all the women. Similarly, the data collection procedures were consistent for each of the interviews done. An important part of the data collection procedures was to allow for each of the women to review their transcribed texts to ensure that their voice was maintained. The women also denoted

what demographic information they wanted disclosed that was subsequently linked to their interview.

The final process of using the tool of interviews under my methodology was to analyze the data with organic inquiry procedures. This was done using organic inquiry's three-step process of preparation, inspiration, and integration. Each of the individual transcribed interviews was analyzed under the same framework. This was done to be consistent and to create a grounding format to analyzing the data. The review process of analyzing the interviews allowed for final categorizing of themes, including similarities and differences. My guidelines and procedures that were followed for the interviews set the platform for synthesizing the data into the research.

Researcher as the instrument. Organic inquiry views the researcher as the container in which the research is carried out within (Clements, 2002, 2004; Clements et al., 1998a. 1998b). The researcher influences the topic selection and research design, and therefore this is defined as the personal concept, one of the rooted foundations of organic inquiry (Clements, 2002, 2004; Clements et al., 1998a, 1998b). The researcher will generally share experiences or identify to some extent with participants' experiences. From this basis, Clements describes the researcher's psyche as the instrument through which the new knowledge is created and to how it is integrated into the research (Clements, 2002; 2004). The researcher is transparent about procedures, design, and motivations behind the research, and therefore, any biases are brought to the surface (Clements, 2002; 2004; Clements et al., 1998a).

Throughout the interviewing process, I shared with the women my research purpose and underlying interest regarding my topic. This was done formally through the

flyer that was used to recruit participants and stated on the consent form as well as informally during my conversations with the women during the interview. I found it important to acknowledge to the women when I identified strongly about something they shared during the interview. I also made sure to confirm my understanding about important concepts they shared with me during the interview to ensure that I understood their perspective. I would do this by either paraphrasing or asking for clarification from the women interviewed.

Procedures for interviews. The following steps were taken for individual interviews. Each of the women who were selected to participate were contacted by telephone to begin dialoging about the research purpose and to explain expectations for their participation. This dialog was important to create rapport and to develop a trust-building relationship. Each participant was sent via email, the consent form that explained the research purpose and explanation of what was expected of them. In a follow up phone conversation with each of the women, we discussed the consent form to assure it was clearly understood and provided the opportunity to express any questions or concerns. Thereafter, I corresponded with the women through email to schedule the interviews according to their comfort and convenience. The consent forms were signed on the day of the interview before I began each interview; I once again made sure each woman understood all components on the consent form before signing it.

Prior to the interview date, each woman was reminded to bring to the interview an image of the crone(s) with which they most identified with. This request was included on the consent form with a purpose to have a visual depiction of the crone I was discussing with them in the interview. The image served as an avenue for intention in entering the

liminal space regarding the relationship of the crone archetype with the woman being

interviewed (Clements, 2002, 2004; Curry & Wells, 2006). I emailed a question guide to

each of the women prior to the interview date for disclosure purposes to build trust and to

provide them with a level of comfort in knowing ahead of time the types of information I

was seeking.

Before each interview, I spent time preparing by utilizing the organic inquiry three-

step process – preparation, inspiration, and integration (Clements, 2002, 2004). I

prepared by engaging in a short meditation to honor the space I was entering with each

participant and to consider the ethical issues in interviewing individuals. As a part of

creating sacred space during the interview session, I lit a candle prior to beginning the

interview to remind me of the organic inquiry principles; that research is sacred and

connected (Clements, 2004; Curry & Wells, 2006). My intention was also to maintain

the voice of the women participants from their perspective.

Interview guide. An interview guide prepared with questions based on topics

pertaining to the research purpose can guide the researcher through the interview process

(Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Levesque-Lopman, 2000). In developing an interview

guide, it was very helpful to have different questions in which to excavate knowledge

from women with slightly different perspectives (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross,

2007; Hess-Biber, 2007; Holstein & Minkler, 2003). The interview guide was utilized as

a prime resource of questioning, but allowed for other questions that arose during the

interview process. Clements (2002, 2004) suggests using a three-part layering of

questions approach to avoid missing any important topics:

> The first layer is unstructured, a call for the participant's personal story on
> her own terms. In the second layer, she will direct the participant to more

specific concerns. The final layer, she will ask focused and leading
questions about topics that have not been covered.
(Clements, 2002, p. 150)

By applying Clements methodology to my research, the first question to each of the

women was to tell me their story about their crone image and what they found important

about the crone's story. The second layer of questioning delves deeper into how the

participant's "activate" their crone image. The final layer of questioning addressed gaps

or other subjects noted during the interview I thought important to ask regarding my

research purpose. Appendix C demonstrates the research guide I utilized in my

questioning of participants.

Data Collection Procedures

An important principle in feminist methodology is to maintain the voice of those

interviewed and thus it was important to share the transcribed texts with interviewees

(DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross, 2007; Hess-Biber, 2007; Levesque-Lopman, 2000;

Smith, 2007). Organic inquiry states it is essential to return to the participant after

interviews have been transcribed to verify for understanding and allow participants the

option to omit any parts of the text they desired (Clements, 2002, 2004; Clements, et al.,

1998a). When transcribing the interviews I made only minor edits for spelling or

clarifications and to maintain the voice of the women. The transcribed texts were

prepared as a dialog or conversation and were denoted as such with short phrases split by

a dot-dot-dot format. There was no attempt to construct grammatically correct sentences.

Each transcribed interview and summary of the transcribed texts were sent to the women

I interviewed to review, to make corrections and/or to omit any part of the texts.

A separate form containing demographic information was gathered from participants upon completion of the interview. Clements (2002, 2004) and the creators of Organic Inquiry (Clements et al., 1998a) suggest that the participants be allowed to denote what demographic information they feel pertinent to disclose in relation to the research focus. Therefore, a separate demographic information and disclosure form (see Appendix D) was distributed to the women for authorization with their transcribed interviews (e.g. age, race/ethnicity, class, professional background, marital/single status, or other information). In addition, both the demographic information disclosure form and the consent form required the women participants to denote a pseudonym of their choice or a given first name only. Curry and Wells (2006) suggest that participants who use their given first name should have ample opportunity to subsequently change this to a pseudonym. Therefore, the first request for a denoted pseudonym was on the consent form and the second request for pseudonym was asked again on the demographic information collected from participants during the review of the transcribed texts from the interviews.

Only pseudonyms or first names denoted by the participants were used in the research process and documentation. Confidentiality was maintained to linking research texts, transcribed texts, and digital records to the actual participant (especially notated on consent form). A coding of each person's legal name (noted on the consent form) was linked to his or her chosen pseudonym in a secure log. All researcher notes, memoing regarding participant interviews, including transcriptions, were kept in a secure file cabinet in the home of the researcher. No one else, including others who reside in the researcher's household, had access to the filing cabinet where confidential documents are

stored during the research process. Upon the completion of the research process, August 31, 2011, coding documents and the tape-recorded content are scheduled for destruction. A research proposal based on the methodology and procedures described in this chapter was submitted and approved by St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board (IRB) on December 3rd, 2010. The IRB's primary focus is to safeguard and respect the rights and welfare of human subjects in research.

Data Analysis and Organic Inquiry Procedures

The creators of organic inquiry apply the five rooted foundations (sacred, personal, chthonic, relational, and transformational) to the data analysis process (Clements, 2002, 2004; Clements et al., 1998a, 1998b). The research data is to be honored as sacred and given reverence. The researcher may share similar experiences or identify with the research data and is therefore personal. Data analysis is also chthonic and evolves within the research process, under a framework that guides the researcher. Analysis of the data is subjective, in that the researcher has similar experiences relating to the topic, and will be integrated through the lens of the researcher. Ultimately, research conclusions bring about new understanding, awareness, and transformation for all parties involved - the researcher, the participants, and the reader.

The three-step approach is applied to the data analysis process, giving a framework to work with while still allowing the process to evolve and to avoid predetermined outcomes of the research (Clements, 2002, 2004). The research analysis and results focus on the creation of knowledge *for* women not *of* women (DeVault, 1999). Organic inquiry encourages transformation by "inviting individual readers to engage with the data in parallel with the model analysis presented by the researcher" (Clements 2002, p. 176).

The stories of the participants combined with the experiences of the researcher may help the reader find personal meaning resulting in some form of transformation (Braud, 2004).

Clements' (2002, 2004) three-step approach was utilized as a grounded framework for analyzing the seven interviews with women. The first step was preparation and required intentional openness to the data analysis process. The awareness that the ego wants to control the process and letting go of any predetermined outcomes before the process is completed is necessary in preparation (Clements, 2002, 2004). For example, when I transcribed the women's interviews, I had to intentionally remind myself to not yet begin the data analysis process. In addition, during the data analysis process while reviewing each interview several times, I needed to avoid jumping ahead into categorizing themes and stick to following my process for data analysis. In preparing to review interviews, I lit a candle for my intention and recited the mantra – "research is sacred and connected and it is my desire to maintain the voice of these women".

The inspiration step of organic inquiry's three-step process is being open to the liminal experience or otherwise different ways of arriving at insights and knowledge (Clements, 2002, 2004). This requires paying attention to all the senses - thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuiting – as well as any synchronicities that may arise (Clements, 2002, 2004). For example, after each of the interviews with the women, I wrote down in a journal any significant thoughts or feelings. This was also done during the data analysis process of reviewing the interview transcripts. Therefore, the inspiration step of organic inquiry seems to naturally follow the preparation step and with a grounded framework for doing data analysis.

There was a specific framework that I set in reviewing each of the women's interviews for data analysis. Each interview was reviewed three times with a specific sequence to how they were reviewed. The first review was done by listening to the voice-recorded interview without any analysis of the transcribed texts. If the women had given me a crone image I listened to the interview with the image in front of me. The focus was to listen and take in the voice and perspective of the woman who had interviewed without making any written notations. Immediately after the first review, I intentionally took a short walk outside to allow for the interview to sink in and to pay attention to my thoughts. For the second review of the interview, I listened to the voice-recorded interview and made markings and highlights to the transcribed texts that had been reviewed and returned to me by the women. The image of the crone was in front of me if the women had given me one. After listening to the interview for the second time, I returned to look at my journal notes from the initial interviews and any texts given to me by the women, also making highlights and markings on these. For the third review of each of the interviews I read the transcribed texts and categorized any themes that seemed to jump from the data. The themes were organized in the context of each of the interviews with the women and were not separated out or co-mingled. This is because the themes come from the women and will return to them as their issues and not categories to be pooled together in a hierarchal manner (Freire, 2003). The reader of this research will extract their own themes that they resonate within the interviews. The researcher will extract common themes from the women's interviews for discussion and implications of this research, but from the perspective of the researcher. The themes will

be denoted as common threads as they are inter-connected in of themselves to the women

and to their crone relationships in the form of a web.

The final step of organic inquiry's three-step process is integration. This is where

the data analysis is integrated within the research by weaving together the literature, the

interviews, the analysis, and also including the liminal experiences to synthesize together

(Clements, 2002, 2004).

Ethical Considerations

There are ethical considerations in doing research about older women. The greatest

concern is the potential for extortion (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006) and manipulation in

studying the elderly population. The feminist critique of methodology attempts to

address ethical issues from the onset of the research process (DeVault, 1999; Smith,

2007). "Ethical discussions usually remain detached from a discussion of the research

process; some researchers consider this aspect of research as an afterthought" (Hesse-

Biber, 2007, p. 17).   Feminist ethnographic principles, established from the beginning of

this research, address ethical considerations for women, such as: maintaining the voice of

women interviewed, leveling the power position between researcher and interviewee, and

addressing appropriation and dissemination of knowledge (DeVault, 1999; Smith, 2007).

Therefore, the key feminist ethnographic principles that have been adopted for this

research will also help to avoid the potential for extortion and manipulation of older

women.

Besides the feminist principles, the concept of reflexivity has ethical considerations

that are outside the scope of just doing research about women (DeVault, 1999).

According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006), "reflexivity is the process through which a

researcher recognizes, examines, and understands how his or her own social background

and assumptions can intervene in the research process" (p. 141). When interviewing

older women, it becomes appropriate for the researcher to acknowledge differences or

even to disclose the underlying agenda of the research (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross,

2007; Hess-Biber, 2007; Levesque-Lopman, 2000; Smith, 2007). A more concise

definition of reflexivity is provided by Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007):

> Reflexivity exposes the exercise of power throughout the entire research
> process. It questions the authority of knowledge and opens up the
> possibility for negotiating knowledge claims as well as holds researchers
> accountable to those with whom they research. Reflexivity addresses two
> central questions that concern feminist researchers – what can we know
> and how do we know it?....Although reflexivity is not a new concept,
> feminist researchers bring a unique perspective to the understanding and
> practice of reflexivity. (p. 495)

The principles of reflexivity are applied throughout the research process. As a

researcher, applying reflexivity principles means that it is important to acknowledge the

"power" position I hold in relation to the women interviewed and my accountability to

them. I need to acknowledge that my perceptions may differ from theirs as a result of my

experiences or social background, and therefore I need to be sensitive to this, especially

in the creation of knowledge.

Design Specific Limitations

Research conclusions to some extent can be slanted towards the biases of the

researcher. This can also be the case for feminist researchers who attempt to represent

the conceptual ideas of those they study and promote the preservation of women's speech

(DeVault, 1999). Feminist focused research can create a limitation when the researcher

has "too little identification with the subjects of the research distances and distorts, but

too much identification can obscure the faults of the interviewees" (Rubin & Rubin,

1995, p. 37). One must be aware there can be a lot of grey area creating room for misrepresentation. There are always limitations to the creating and appropriating of knowledge in the process of research (DeVault, 1999; DeVault & Gross, 2007; Hess-Biber, 2007; Levesque-Lopman, 2000; Smith, 2007).

The chthonic concept of organic inquiry based on blending the researchers experience and intuition with that of the participants of the research has the potential to slant the outcome (Shillington, 2004). Curry and Wells (2006) state that in organic inquiry "everything appears not only related, but relevant, and the essential is difficult to distinguish from the meaningfully tangential" (p. 23). Although this may create limitations in analyzing the data, Braud (2004) argues that "organic inquiry deliberately focuses on experiences rather than objective reality" (p.22), especially because of the psycho-spiritual nature grounded in this methodology. Criticisms are usually based on a different paradigm slanted towards positivist/post-positivist thinking. The Organic Inquiry process does require checks and balances which I have included, such as confirming and clarifying the textual intent of the created knowledge with participants at several stages, and by intentionally grounding the research process with Clements' (2002, 2004) three-step process of preparation, inspiration, and integration.

Results

The purpose of this chapter records the results of interviews with seven women who identify with crone archetypal images. It is divided into two sections. The first section describes observations from the researcher's perspective. This is followed by a section about the data from the transcribed interviews. The interview data section records a synopsis of each of the interviews and is organized by the pseudonym name, including their demographic information that they have disclosed.

Observations

There are several observations from the interviews that are described. The first part records the logistics and specifics of the interviews and the different crone images the women identified with. Followed by my reactions to the interviews and the unexpected observations.

Interview logistics and specifics. The interview sessions with the women lasted between 40 minutes and 90 minutes.   The locations of the interviews were determined by the women, who either requested that it be done in their homes, at a private office, or at the researcher's home in a private room. One of the interviews was completed over the internet using Skype video streaming. For each of the interviews that occurred in their homes, they seemed to want to welcome the researcher. This was evident as the women voluntarily shared other sacred images with the researcher that did not specifically relate to the crone.

The following tasks were important for the purpose of establishing a relationship that minimized the hierarchal nature of the researcher over the participant, particularly during the interviews at the researchers home. The interviews that took place in the

researcher's home were set up to create an ambiance of comfort and security. To do so, a fire was lit in the fireplace where the interviews occurred. Also, the women were given the choice of which chair they felt most content to sit in, in front of the fireplace. In accordance with the organic inquiry process, prior to each of the interviews, the researcher completed steps of preparation, such as a meditation of intention. A candle was lit during all the interviews to acknowledge and to bring intention to maintaining the voice of the women.

Interview process. Prior to the interviews, the researcher completed a telephone conversation with each of the women discussing some component of the interview process and talking with the women about their crone image(s). The researcher found this step helped immensely in building rapport with the women, establishing a comfortable level of relationship to move into the interview with the women. Rapport was further developed during the interview when the researcher at certain points shared with the women how she identified with their response by sharing about her experiences. In many cases, the women seemed to open up and share more when the researcher disclosed her experiences or when she expressed that she was intrigued by their ideas. The researcher observed that this form of reciprocal sharing seemed to build trust within the interview relationship.

An interview guide (see Appendix C) was mailed to the participants to disclose the types of questions that were anticipated to be asked relating to the research purpose. Most of the women interviewed acknowledged that they appreciated receiving the question guide prior to the interview. It appeared to bring a level of reassurance for them to know the type of questions that might be asked during the interview. A few of the

women had done some preparations prior to the interview. This became evident by the following examples: some of the women disclosed they had printed their crone images from the internet, at one moment in an interview a woman referred to her notes to demonstrate a point, another woman had typed up a summary of her crone's story that described how she resonated with her crone and left a copy with the researcher. There were two women who shared poetry they had previously written about their crone and gave a copy to the researcher. However, the researcher observed that all these women described their crones as if they knew them intimately and seemed to supplement their interview with the extra materials they prepared to help the researcher understand their perspective.

The final step of the interview process was to send the transcribed interviews to the women for review. The researcher observed that the women appreciated this step and looked forward to reviewing their transcripts. Minor editorial changes were made by the women to their transcripts. There was one woman who expanded on certain parts that brought clarity and deepened the insights she was demonstrating.

Crone images. The women were asked to bring the crone image(s) they most identified with to the interview. Each of the women had more than one crone image that they identified with. A couple of the women showed the researcher collages they had created that contained several crone images within them. In response to one of the questions in the interview, some of the women listed several model crone examples that they saw in culture today (see appendix E).

Researcher's reactions. Upon completing each of the interviews, I made reflections in her journal, noting observations or feelings that came up. Most of the

interviews, either during the interview or after, elicited some deep emotions from the researcher and the level of its intensity surprised her. The interviews reflected women expressing deep courage and powerful messages. In addition, there was great joy and laughter that followed many of the responses from the women. The emotions of joy, laughter, and tears were also experienced by the researcher throughout the data analysis process in listening and reviewing the interviews several times.

Unexpected observations. The research purpose was to describe the lived experience of women who "activate" the crone archetype. The "activation" is defined by Jean Shinoda Bolen (1994, 2001) as the process of becoming the crone. A few of the women interviewed identified with this terminology, however, several of the women did not identify with this word. Two of the women viewed "activating" as turning on a switch and described how they would define the process of becoming a crone. Grace explains this:

> *The crone is a reality for me. The images of the crone I am living them (long pause). When I think of activating I think of turning on switch. That would be a word that I could not tell you that all of a sudden in my life I'm a crone.*
>
> *I think maybe you do it subconsciously, because you come into cronyism in a very slow way. You evolve into it in a very subconscious way. You don't just wake up one morning and say you are a crone. When you go through a life transformation then it becomes a conscious thing. I think there are probably a lot of people who deny it forever. I think it either renews you or it or it causes problems by denying it.*

Wanbli does not identify with the "activate" terminology and describes why:

> *That word actually **doesn't,** because the crone **evolves**. You don't activate it or turn it on. I think it is part of what you are becoming or what you are transforming into. It feels like it is a slow moving into, it is a process, but we **cannot** stop it. Whether you want to or not, you can move into that piece with curiosity, with dignity, and with power. Or you can hold back and you can be very resistant and go into the cronedom with fear.*

*You can look at all those people around that are empowering themselves.
I see her [crone] evolving for me, definitely taking all the pieces of the
past as a maiden, motherhood symbolically meaning the nurturing part,
and [the crone] beginning to nurture myself.   This is a choice for me to
evolving into and making it a part of my process and going in open,
without societies expectations of how it should be.*

Two of the women identified with the terminology "activating" the crone. Julia describes

what she has experienced in activating her crone:

*The whole menopause thing for women is almost like their **bodies** tell them
when they become something else. Then it ends, there is a **mourning** that
happens, because you know you are transitioning into something else.
When you get up and look in the mirror and see these wrinkles, and then
accept that my body is changing, that acceptance does activate something
different inside of me.   When I explore a goddess and find I relate to her, I
activate her within myself.*

Andrea explains how she "activates" her crone:

*I think that you have the Goddesses and the crones and they are in books
and in stories. But when you activate them, you take them **on**, you **live**
what they represent. For Sophia, it is like her **energy,** her **insights.** I can
use it and activate it.   When some insights come to me, I am not even
trying and insight comes. That is Sophia working again (she chuckles).*

Another observation that was unanticipated by the researcher was that several of the

women thanked her for doing the interview. Some of the comments were: *I appreciate*

you doing this. It was fun! In the final part of the interview, these women expressed to

the researcher the importance of bringing about awareness regarding the crone archetype

to honor women in our society. Julia stated, *I'm glad you are doing this because I think*

that whatever way she [the crone] can be honored, is a good thing. These women shared

their crone's story and how they themselves have found honor from their crone images.

Upon the researcher closing the interview with one of the woman, Isis expressed *I think*

Joanne, it is wonderful that you are doing this, because until we realize that we are of

value [women], in that we have value, that we have come here to do something. In and of

ourselves we are whole, just the way we are. We don't have to change to be who we are.

These words from Isis surprised the researcher because of the intensity with which they

invoked something deep inside her. For the researcher, it was an honor to interview

seven different women and she was humbled to be thanked for doing so.

Interview Data

This section is a synthesized summary of the transcripts for each of the seven

women interviewed who identified with crone images.   The women are denoted by their

chosen pseudonym names: Andrea, Grace, Isis, Julia, Lisa, Caroline, and Wanbli. For

each of the women interviewed, the women describe their own demographics. A

synopsis of the interview follows in their voice and from their perspective. The final part

of each woman's section is resonating threads that are uncovered from their particular

interview.

Andrea

*When I connect with Sophia, I can **be** that free person! - Andrea*

Andrea describes herself. She is a white woman who is 75 years old. She grew

up in New York. Her profession was in Nursing and she has a BSN. She is a missionary

and has lived in Brazil, Chile, and Guatemala. She has worked for many years in mental

health [advocating] for women and alternative medicine.

Describing her crone. Andrea uses the metaphor of a flower to represent herself as

a crone. She is at a point in her life where she is completely open and listening.

> *I have an image of this **beautiful** rose. This beautiful rose is from my*
> *garden. It is at the point where it is **completely** open. It is fully listening*
> *and accepting (Andrea chuckles). It is at its moment in life where I am at.*

> *Where it has come to a point - we don't have to worry - we can be*
> *completely open to people. Just the way [they] are.*

Andrea tells the story of her crone who is Hagia Sophia, the Greek Goddess of Wisdom,

and how her name has evolved into the word and image of the *Hag*.

> *I connect most with **Sophia**. Sophia is only part of the name, because the*
> *Greek Goddess was named Hagia Sophia. Hagia is **holy** in Greek - **Holy***
> ***Wisdom.** Hagia Sophia is the Goddess' name in Greek. Actually, when*
> *the Christian Churches tried to downplay the Goddesses, they **downplayed***
> *the name. So they took Hagia off and they started calling her **Hag** and*
> *made her into a **negative.** So, most of the time she is known only as*
> *Sophia.*

Andrea continues to describe the essence of Hagia Sophia's story and the Greek

definitions of different ways of knowing:

> *Sophia, now more in my older years [represents] wisdom. And what is*
> *wisdom? The Greeks had two ways of knowing. One was knowing from*
> *the **outside** - knowing **objectively.** This was called **logos.** Then there was*
> *the knowing from the **inside** and they called that **gnosis**, which refers to*
> *wisdom or insight. So this is where **Sophia** comes in. Sophia is **very***
> *feminine, **intuitive** – [representing] **insight**. These are the very aspects*
> *that the patriarchy did not like and tried to get rid of. That is what she*
> *represents to **me**. Sophia is very **free**.*
>
> *From what I understand, Sophia task would be sorting out your own*
> *religious and spiritual feelings, loyalties and beliefs. What comes from*
> ***inside.** Not what came from outside or what we were taught. But, what*
> *comes from inside - what do I feel - what do I believe. At this time in my*
> *life I am really connecting with this. Sophia is an archetype that is not*
> *concerned with politically correct **response**s. But with **knowing** and*
> *following her particular soul path from **inside.** What **I** have now inside me*
> *- I believe. That is how I connect with Sophia.*

Andrea explains how she came to feeling freer to connecting with Sophia now at a

different stage of her life and in learning to trust her insights.

> *For much of my life I really believed all the things that I heard and I saw –*
> *or what I was **taught.** Now when I see things or when I'm reading things -*
> *even reading the Bible - I come to say "well I don't **believe** that." When I*
> *connect with Sophia I can **be** that free person. Be able to say what I really*
> ***believe**. So you know in that sense, that is where I feel much **freer** now -*

and it's coming from inside, not from outside. I know this might be really hard to describe, but that freer feeling.

*I think some of it is the stage that I'm in my life at my age. When you are younger you are learning - you are taking all this stuff in. Then you come to a point where you are not taking in. You want to see what's in there [inside] - what do I believe and what do I want to throw out (Andrea laughs). I'm able to say, "This is the way I **see** it, and I'm fine with that."*

*Things have been **ingrained** in us. [You realize] I don't have to do all that. I don't have to **think** all that (Andrea laughs). With Sophia, [I feel] this **freedom** from the need to **conform** to institutional ways. The freedom to **not** [be] controlled and to make definitions ourselves.*

*So, in that sense it is what comes from inside - **trust it!** I did not always trust it before. More and more I trust it (Andrea chuckles). Yeah, so then being able to trust **my** insights.*

Through many years of acquiring wisdom Andrea now has sifted through what she believes to be true, her Sophia inside telling her the truth, even though it may be contrary to what most people believe. For Andrea, it is getting to *the soul of the matter* - the truth. *It is to get to the **deepest** part of situations with people. What is really the root [of the issue].* Andrea gives a few examples of trusting her inner wisdom by getting to *the soul of the matter.*

One example of getting to the soul of the matter of how women react under distress. Andrea realized through Joan Chittister's writings how the Bible story of Mary going to visit Elisabeth demonstrates how women bond rather than fight and flight in distress.

*On the day when Mary was going to visit Elisabeth - the visitation story. We were always taught, when you are anxious, you either **fight** or you **flight**. You flee, you know! Just look at this story now. Elisabeth is anxious because she is an old lady and is going to have a baby. Mary is anxious because she is going to have her first baby and it is, you know, without a husband and all this stuff. So what happens is that they **bond** together. That is what women do! When they are anxious they **bond**! They don't **fight and flight** (Andrea chuckles). That is a man's way of doing it. So, I said to myself, Whoa, see - I don't have to conform to that*

*old thing we were taught (Andrea laughing). I can **believe** this. I really believe this.*

So, the freedom to not conform. I guess that is to make new definitions of things.

Andrea learns to define what the Eucharist means to her that is different than how the institution defines it by listening to her inner knowing.

*Eucharist is not just what happens at Mass. Eucharist is what happens around the table - our table (Andrea chuckles). Eucharist is when Jesus says, "When two or three get together in my name, there I am in the mist of them." But the Catholic Church has **taken** Eucharist and made **Mass** as the only way. When the priests can consecrate and all - that part isn't so important. It is the **connection** of the people in the group (she chuckles). We go to Mass on Sunday. And then **after** Mass we go to one of the religious' houses that are near the church. We have sweet bread and coffee and we share (chuckles). And **that is** our Eucharist - just as much as the Mass is - or maybe even **more**.*

Andrea connects to Sophia through prayer and listening inside. She experiences Sophia by listening to the divine feminine, listening to God, and listening to Sophia that is also present through people. Andrea describes how she connects with Sophia:

*One of the ways is in my prayer. Most of the time when I thought of prayer or when I thought I was praying was when I was saying prayer and saying words. But now I have had enough words.   I think the **Sophia** way of doing it is **listening.** I think listening for the divine feminine - listening to God - listening to other people. I think my prayer has changed more, and in that sense it is a Sophia way I think of prayer.*

Andrea further expands on how she views the differences between her inner wisdom and the outer wisdom she previously described. She explains how her inner wisdom has given her a sense of self-worth and confidence.

*I think it has helped me to have more confidence in myself - More confidence in my **inside.** When something comes to me, **I listen** to it. I respect it and I follow it more than when I was younger. Because when I was younger I would follow the rules (Andrea chuckles). I would follow all these rules. Now I say - this has come to me – it is an insight that has come to me - and I believe in it. In that way it has changed.*

*When I meet people and I'm talking with them. I **sense** more things that go beyond the words. I sense more about the person's character. Sort of like it is listening between the words - listening in a different way. I have come to that more. It is not like that other person is telling me, but it is like I'm connecting into the collective unconscious or something. I'm connecting into something else, into Sophia. So that is how I'm perceiving this - how I'm sensing it. The collective unconscious, I think it is a level of that. We are all **connected**, but we don't even think about it or even know about it.*

In describing her crone's name that evolved into the name *hag*, the researcher asked Andrea why she thought it has become a name with negative connotations. Andrea talks about this and explains the influence of patriarchy and the hierarchy of the Church.

*They were trying to get **rid** of the Goddesses – that is the Christian religions. They wanted only the **male** God. The patriarchy that came in did not want any Goddesses. They did not want any feminine divine. So that is why they turned Hagia Sophia into **Old Hag**.*

***Patriarchy** did it on **purpose**. I do not think it just happened. I think it was **purposely** done that way. They **did** that because they wanted to **suppress** the **goddesses**. They wanted to suppress all **feminine** divine. So they only wanted to have a male god. Before patriarchy came along there was the trinity - father, mother and spirit – that is another **trinity** of the Eastern Christians. But that was also suppressed. They did not **want** to have the feminine in any of it. They wanted it all masculine. They wanted the **power**. They wanted to be in **charge**. They didn't want women. Women were a **second** rate citizen (Andrea laughs). [For example] Saint Paul says that women should not speak in Church and all that stuff – should not be able to **preach**. Before that they [women] were all doing that, they were all equal with everybody.*

Threads uncovered from Andrea. Through Sophia, the Greek Goddess of Wisdom, Andrea has found the freedom and confidence to be herself and to trust her insights, even if they are contrary to other systemic beliefs. Andrea crone represents the point in her life where she is completely open and accepting. Sophia represents the feminine intuitive way of knowing, Greek Gnosis, that comes from inside in contrast to the objective way of knowing that which is outside of us. Andrea now has the time and

space where she can reflect and listen to the Sophia way of knowing. Sophia has helped

her get to the *soul of the matter* or what Andrea considers the truth from her perspective.

That is the objective Greek logos way of knowing that is outside of us has been engrained

as the only valid way of knowing. This validation has given patriarchy and the

institutional Church support for suppressing the sacred feminine that represents the

intuitive way of knowing. Andrea feels this is important to recognize because it gets at

the soul of the matter of women being undervalued in our culture. A change in

terminology reflects the change in women's value in our culture. Hagia Sophia, meaning

Holy Wisdom, became Hagia, which evolved into Old Hag with negative connotations.

Andrea has reclaimed the value of the feminine intuitive way of knowing by activating

the archetype of Sophia.

Caroline

Sophia has given me the courage to be different.

To just be who I am. - Caroline

Caroline describes herself. She was adopted and is 80 years old. She has learned

that she is of Welsh/Cornish, Norwegian/German, and French descent. She grew up in

Minneapolis. She was married and has 8 children and 22 grans [her term for

grandchildren], and four great-grans. She was an adolescent and family therapist.

Caroline describes her crone images. Caroline describes three images that

represent wisdom for her. The images are the owl, Sophia wisdom represented by The

Book of Wisdom from the Bible, and the image of a Native American Woman. She

explains the significance of the owl and what the wood figurine means to her:

> *The owl appealed to me when I was in Athens, Greece and I saw Athena.*
> *She was identified as a wisdom figure and the owl was her symbol. So*

when I came home I had an image of Athena as an owl. Of course that one has gotten broken through the years (Caroline laughs). So I have a collection of owls now.

I wanted to develop wisdom as I got older. That was important to me at that time. I wanted to be reminded of my goal of wisdom. To gain wisdom in my life.

The small owl has black eyes and a web-like body carved out of the wood, with the insides hollow that contains a small piece. Caroline explains the significance of this particular owl from her collection:

There is a little owl inside of it [the wooden carved owl]. So for me, like maybe the voice inside of me [referring to what the inside represents], that is why I chose this one. I liked the way he or she is looking straight at you. Looking ahead, looking out onto the world and somehow for me looking happy (laughter).

It kind of reminds me when I was a little kid and I had gone to confession. I was sure that I did everything wrong in the world. The confessor, the priest, said "Dear, just let your own conscious be your guide." So that is kind of like my conscious inside – but not just conscious - it is Sophia.

Caroline has identified with other Sophia images as she has aged and become a crone:

I needed a more specific image. I found Sophia [learned about Sophia by] reading much of what she is quoted in the Bible. I wanted in my life and at the crossroads what called people to something more. I just liked that image of her. In the Wisdom literature in the Bible, I liked that she was there when creation began. You know the quote that says "I was with you when you made the stars and the moon" - Everything that Sophia is, is the God present. [She] was always there and that the sense will always be there and that we need to appreciate that.

Caroline describes another image which is an elder that has great significance to her:

Another image I have in my mind is a Native American woman with many wrinkles. She was seen as a sage, a person that in her clan or in her community was appreciated to share wisdom. It means all the lines in her face represent that she has lived - it incorporates the sadness' and the joys

and the growths and just her life. She really has lived. She hasn't tried to pretend that she is different than what she is. It doesn't matter that she is wrinkled. Except that it is an honor to have those wrinkles. Because it signifies that she really has lived!

There have been many transitions for Caroline throughout her life. She describes how

Sophia at the crossroads has been there for her during these transitions.

One of the reasons the [image] of being at the crossroads appealed to me was regarding my marriage. Do I continue in that marriage that was destructive to the family or do I take the courage and the wisdom to stop it? To get out of it, to divorce? Then what was that going to mean for my life? An attorney said "You are never going to make it on your own." Four of my kids were still home and four had already left because of the abusive father.

So that was an important image because at that time it wasn't just the crossroads of ending a marriage. It was what am I going to do with my life? At that time I had not worked, I was a stay at home wife. I hadn't finished my college degree. I had very much been part of a couple. So it was a different world to go into. I was really lucky. A woman asked me to volunteer at an adolescent treatment program and as a result hired me. So it was feeding in both parts of me, the need to nurture and to have a different life and it brought me into the world as it was at that time.

Sophia at the crossroads has given Caroline insights that have motivated her to transition

from a male-centered God to honoring the sacred feminine.

[Sophia] has encouraged me to travel looking at the different countries and how they handle social problems and work with people. And from there I also needed to find for me who God is. So part of it was in the transition from a male-church to look at the Black Madonna's in the different countries. To explore what other cultures had in regarding to a female image of God and how that impacted and gave more form to what the divine is all about.

In France I saw many Black Madonna's in churches, you know, every place you went practically. This Black Madonna represents the vastness of the divinity and how it has been limited by the Europeans and the Catholic Church. They [created] portrayals of Mary as a white women rather than taking into account she probably wasn't white.

The researcher responds: *So she was bleached? (Laughter from both.)* Caroline

continues:

> *Yeah, so for me then Sophia as a wisdom figure has helped me to*
> *recognize all of the ways that the divine is present in the world. This*
> *affects how one sees the world and how they see their lives. It has been*
> *for me so humbling to observe others in their spiritual life. How they see*
> *their image has helped them in different cultures - the Black Madonna or*
> *a goddess or Sophia, whatever names that she has in the different cultures.*
>
> *The whole idea of a female image is just powerful. You know, I think of*
> *being in Malta and seeing all of the places there the goddesses had been*
> *worshiped or the awareness of Mother Earth [in Latin America]. For me*
> *the whole Sophia has been the wisdom figure, I guess[that] underlies all*
> *that.*

Caroline describes how she has observed how other cultures honor the feminine divine

through female images:

> *It seems to be coming more from people's gut and it is taken to their heart,*
> *so to speak.*
>
> *In Chile or in Guatemala, any of those countries where they are plagued*
> *with government being bad to them, that female image is so nurturing for*
> *them and they express it. They wouldn't hesitate to talk amongst*
> *themselves. I think here [in the U.S.] it has been more private, whereas*
> *there it permeates their whole being and their whole expressions with*
> *each other.*
>
> *In Cuba they also honor all the Saints but they have different names for*
> *them – from the [syncretic] religion Santería. When I was in Cuba I met a*
> *man who had carved out of wood, so it was dark, the female figure holding*
> *out her child [referring to the Madonna]. And she had no face, I mean*
> *you don't see any eyes. That is because it was hard to look at what was*
> *happening to the people in her life [the Cuban people]. The figure of the*
> *female was very important to [this Cuban man] that he made her that way.*

Caroline describes how she has found that Sophia has encouraged her when she has

encountered the crossroads in her past:

> *She has given me the courage through time. I don't fit a stereotype.*
> *[Sophia] gives me courage to be different, to not follow the styles of the*

day. To just be who I am. [She] gives me the courage to go within me to find out who I am and act out that way.

I am more self-confident than I have been. Not in to pleasing others as much, you know, coming out of the way a woman was supposed to be at that point in time. And who I am now, significantly different in the sense that, as I say, I am who I am. That is the way it is. That is the way wisdom should present it, knowing within her that she was doing the right thing. It's another outward sign of using your wisdom to know the difference, to figure out what do you do in this part. Sophia please help me…

People recognize that this stage of life that they are in and want to ritualize and celebrate it. They want to help move forward in this stage of life. So this is what I have noticed that I am even thinking I would like to do that now that I am in another state - it feels like moving into another stage [of croning].

Caroline had expressed her desire to develop wisdom as she got older. She expands

about where that desire comes from:

I had a grandmother who was very wise. So noting what she did throughout her life made me want to develop what I saw in her, the wisdom and the caring that I saw her exhibit. And needing a sacred image maybe to achieve that to become that wise-person. Sophia answered that for me.

Mary has served me through the years. Having lost [my mother], and having been adopted and then my adopted mother being killed in an automobile accident when I was five. Then having a step mother after that, we never clicked really well. The idea of having Mary as my mother image worked really well for me as a younger woman. And then I needed something more as I aged. Mary is still important to me. Sophia, you know, inspires me I guess.

[Sophia] undercoats like an automobile has undercoating (laughter from both). To move along you need the undercoating. [Explaining the meaning] Maybe they don't do it anymore. It just comes that way from the manufacture, but it was to protect the car from damage, from the salt maybe. The undercoat, so it gave it something more, make it last longer.

Threads uncovered from Caroline. Sophia has given Caroline the courage to be

who she is, to be different. Sophia has given Caroline more self-confidence and knowing

from within herself that she is doing the right thing. Sophia is the voice inside of

Caroline – her conscious.   As Caroline has aged, she has found that she needed a

different image to remind her of her goal of wisdom than that image of the Virgin Mary

that she depended upon when she was younger. Sophia has helped Caroline through

many transitions where she has been at the crossroads and had to make hard decisions. In

her search for the sacred feminine, Caroline has recognized the intensity of the diverse

images around the world which have impacted how she sees the world and her place

within it. She believes that the divine feminine is a powerful nurturing image. Caroline

has reclaimed her true self by resonating with Sophia.

Grace

I liked her power, she wasn't afraid of life – she was her own person. - Grace

Grace describes herself. She is a 76 year old Caucasian woman. She grew up in

Deephaven, Minnesota. She was educated in Theology and Communication at St.

Catherine University. Her profession was Pastoral Ministry and Master Catechist for

adults and children. Grace practices Celtic Spirituality.

Describing her crones. Grace's crone is the Cailleach from Celtic myth. She

describes the Cailleach with three images that represent the shape-shifter, the Halloween

Witch, and the blue-faced hag-looking Cailleach. Grace tells the story of the Cailleach:

> *The crone image that I relate to is the Cailleach and she is of Celtic myth.
> When I first heard about her, she just captured something in me. I just
> related to her right away. A lot of the myths about the goddesses, Greek
> and Celtic, I think are interesting, but they don't really have anything to
> do with me as a person. Cailleach doesn't come from any family origin
> nor is her legend connected with the Celtic gods and goddess families of
> Ireland. She has existed forever and ever. They can hardly trace back far
> enough to her origins. In Ireland is where the meat of her myth is and
> what I know about.*

Her name means old hag. So the Cailleach is an old hag, a crone, the crone goddess. She is a kind of controller of the land and nature. They call her the old hag of winter. Winter is her time.

She is depicted in contemporary terms as having a blue face, she was ugly, and she was huge. One of the myths about her is that she carried boulders around in her apron [flying around and dropping them] to form the land.

*When I was an Ireland we went to Loughcrew. There is evidence that she had a following of a priestess cult. There are rock and tomb formations - and there's a **huge** rock formation that is a **huge** chair. So, we all got to climb up on it and sit in the **hag's** chair. This hag's chair was a natural formation. To just to sit in that chair and on such a high hill that you could look out - you practically thought you saw all of Ireland. It was just awesome!*

Grace describes the image of the Cailleach that represents the shape-shifter, the melting

of winter into spring:

The myth is that she is a dual personality, because she gives at the end of winter. She gives up her power over nature and the land to spring. So she is connected with Bridget-Bride, the goddess of spring. She is a shape-shifter. I thought this was really interesting, one side of her is spring and the other side is winter. I like the way her face is youthful and then it has wrinkles and she is hag- like.

She ruled the winter, but she allowed herself when it was her time to transcend, she shape-shifted into springtime. She knew that there was no way she could stop that cycle. To take that idea that there is no way to control that life, it is not winter all the time, there is spring time to life, that is good to remember.

Grace resonates deeply with how the Cailleach, the old hag image, has evolved into the

Halloween Witch. Grace describes this:

One of things that I really like about this crone is that she has some historical connections. A sense of realism for me or where she couldn't be stomped out! She still exists! The story of her evolved into the Halloween Witch. Her feast day or her real celebration day is Samhain – Halloween. Because I am a crone, she just captured my imagination. And that is why I have really been able to connect with her.

Researchers think that the witchcraft hunts and the execution of elderly women that practiced healing and spirituality were wisdom figures. She

morphed into this image of the Halloween witch. They were spiritual guides to younger women. These women were looked upon as something scary, evil and they were afraid of [them]. They were burned and murdered and [considered] part of Satanism or the devil. So, this early, early ancient goddess kind of morphed into something that we can really relate to today [referring to the witch].

I am always so appalled when I read anything about the history of the Salem witch-hunts and how the culture feared older women. That was what it was all about. They feared them - the whole aging process our culture fears.

So she went from this wise shape-shifter and nurturer of the land to this figure that people feared.

Grace describes the features of the Cailleach that she resonates with:

I liked her power. She had power and she wasn't afraid of life. She was her own person. She didn't come from the line of gods and goddesses; she didn't have to find an identity through them, it was her own.

As I have moved into crone age, I have evolved from the idea that I'm identified as something or someone. I'm not anyone's mother anymore. My kids are all grown up and they are adults and parents themselves. I don't have a particular title. I have left that behind - I am retired. I am in a different phase. I am in a crone phase. Her strength [Cailleach] is that she is a person of a lot of wisdom. I think it helps me to draw on my own experiences and my own wisdom.

Knowing this the Cailleach has given Grace a sense of value, even though she finds at her age a sense of invisibility in society.

*One of the things as I moved into crone age, I started to experience a sense of being invisible. In my family, I would find myself in conversation and they would be talking around me and over me. Even in your daily life if you go to the grocery store or you go shopping, you can tell people [perceive] this old lady, she is not very important. Like I was invisible, I wasn't there. It is just that kind of attitude that you **sense**. Nobody articulates it, you just **sense** it. At first that really kind of hurt and bothered me.   But then I have gone beyond that.*

[In comparison] the Cailleach is her own person. She didn't have to be addressed as mother or grandma. Another thing I liked about her is that she could let go of her identity because she was always in renewal and

regeneration - the cycle of winter and spring. She was always renewing herself and I think that is what being crone is.

It helps me to realize that it doesn't matter. It isn't an insult to me. It is just the way it is with crones, with older people. You know when I think about the Cailleach, that is the way she was. It didn't matter to her that she was considered an old hag and fierce, and to be avoided. She used her power for her own self-worth. It didn't matter to her and it doesn't matter in real life.

That is the way culture treats older people - It is a given in this Western culture. So, you could take that burden on and let it destroy you and turn into a bitter old person. But I don't want to be that kind of person. I want to be a person that is always moving forward. You have to come to a point where that doesn't matter and it is not going to destroy me. You can either get stuck in that or you can use your wisdom and your experience, know that it is not reality that I am visible. I am a reality.

Grace explains the Cailleach's comfort with her old looks despite society's

emphasis on youthfulness:

*Another thing about her is she was this horrible looking [hag]. They sometimes describe her as having only one eye in the middle of her forehead. You can find pictures of her as this unbelievably grotesque person. But she had this [attitude] - I don't **need** this beauty to be powerful, I don't **need** a perfect shape or face. This is who **I** am! I'm going to use my wisdom and my power and my sense of renewal because I know that I will be regenerated. I'll enter another phase of being a crone.*

I can relate to this because when I look in the mirror and all of sudden I'm like - I don't look like [a hag] - this isn't who I am - I don't have wrinkles, you know - I don't have grey hair that hangs all over in strings (Grace laughs). I don't know if other people experience that, but I don't look like who I imagine I look like [referring to society's perception of old women].

*And so, I **do** look like a hag. I do have characteristics of aging, That's what aging does! **So yeah, I'm a hag**!*

Grace explains how she evolved into identifying with the Cailleach:

There is something about Halloween that just thrills me. Since I was a little kid I have just loved Halloween. Maybe it is because I was born in the fall. I was born in October, I love fall. When I first heard about the Cailleach I kind of laughed because her whole character just struck me as

funny. Here is this hag flying around Ireland with an apron full of rocks dumping them on people or on things and building the earth. It just seemed like such a humorous myth. Then the more I got to thinking about her, I just grew into her. This is really a myth that I can relate to now.

At the time I was not even thinking about cronyism. I don't think the word was ever on my radar. Maybe I was in denial or something, but I was a crone. Of course that was eight years ago and I have evolved over the years. Now that I fully understand that I am a crone, there are so many aspects of her that I want for myself. I want to be more compassionate. I want to be more caring of the earth and more sensitive to animal cruelty. And I want to have the courage, I guess, to speak out when I see injustices.

Through this image [Cailleach], I realize I have the power to do those things.

Grace gives another example of transitioning in her older years and how the

Cailleach has helped her re-create herself:

Being retired is another whole aspect of getting the crone image. I had a really high powered involved position at a parish. I worked for the dioceses for 20 some years. All of a sudden I'm retired. What is the next step? I missed the position. The idea that nobody really cared and it didn't matter what I did, I was just left with my own devices to figure something out.

Getting into the crone stage, there are so many transitions that you have to deal with and cope with. You either turn into this old hag and sit and do nothing for yourself. Or you get energized by [her] and you recreate yourself!

I have had some experience with transitions, but I think when you are in the crone age the transitions are more personalized because you have to do it your own way. You have to draw on your previous experiences. It certainly is helpful to because there is wisdom in every transition that you gleam from it.

Threads uncovered from Grace. In the example of the Cailleach, Grace has

found that she too can be her own person that is not dependent upon being a mother or

some other identity outside herself, such as with a career. She is comfortable with herself

as an old woman despite feeling she is invisible and not reflective of youthfulness, both

perceptions that society emulates. The shape-shifting aspect of the Cailleach, melting winter into spring, reminds Grace that she cannot control the transition of aging, but finds in this metaphor renewal in all her transitions in life. The cycle also represents to her the letting go of one identity to birth another. She does not let society's perception destroy her self-image. Grace resonates with the Cailleach's power, a power in-and-of-itself that could not be smothered out over time, unlike other Goddesses, her image has evolved into the modern day Halloween Witch. Grace is greatly angered in discovering the historical basis of the portrayal of healers and wisdom figures as witches that resulted in the witch-hunts. By reclaiming the Cailleach's images as empowering, she dispels society's image of the hag as negative.

Isis

I think in our crone years, it is all about dipping into our own wisdom.
The crone has been a term that has been demonized, which I really want to help redeem;
it is a very wonderful word [crone].
We come into this world complete; at our core we are divine. – Isis

Isis describes herself.   She grew up in Montana. She is 76 years old. Her race is white. She has a Doctorate in Ministry.

Isis describes her crone. The object that represents Isis' crone image is in the form of a beautiful amethyst rock. She has selected this image from one of many images that she has on her altar at home. Isis describes the crone energy that she receives from her amethyst rock:

> *Amethyst, for me represents wisdom. I think in our crone years, it is all about dipping into our own wisdom. It represents one aspect of crone wisdom for me. I love purple and I love stones and the energy there. They are the oldest things on the planet and they are ancient.*
>
> *It is the crone energy. Whatever we are doing it comes out of energy, because we are just vibrations. We are nothing more than energy. It is*

universal energy. This physical will leave. If we can name it, we find that helpful to the different archetypes. I probably operate, not all the time, but a lot more out of the archetype of the crone. There would be times that I would operate out of the other archetypes: the warrior, the teacher, the healer, the visionary. We have named them in a sense just maybe to understand them more.

We are a field of energy and so we are all connected as one. We are not separate beings, like we think we are. There is a unity here that we physically don't understand. Once in a while there is a gift, you have an experience, a mystical experience and you know it. Energy isn't anything you can [explain]. You just know it and you can experience it. But you can't explain it. Ultimately, they have to see it as a mystery.

Isis views inner wisdom as something that cannot be explained.

We have to come and say it is mystery. It is fine that we need to try to figure things out and that is why we are given an intellect. But this isn't everything. Most the time it comes from the heart, my intuition. I'm sure you have had that experience when you can't explain that. I really don't know where it comes from and I don't know how I know it. But I know I know it! That is partly why society gets so angry with women, particularly men, because they do know some things. They [women] don't know how they know it, they can't explain it, so then it's written off. Nine times out of ten it is right. So there is a deep knowing in us and of course the crone, the hag is able to dip into that. Can they explain it? No! Why do we need to explain it?

Isis believes that women entering cronehood generally do so around 56 years of age. For

some, it is *when they become a grandmother,* for others it *is when their Menses stops.* Isis

thinks it is *very personal when you decide* you are a crone. She entered cronehood over

ten years ago when she was studying with other women in a spiritual guidance program.

She describes what becoming a crone means to her.

For me it just came from within. The crone became very important for me. It has been a term that has been demonized, which I really want to help redeem. It is a very wonderful word.

We were intrigued by the term [crone], a group of women and I talked a lot about being a crone during that time. We decided to meet monthly. I think I was the first one to do a ritual around entering cronedom and that was a lovely celebration. It is the crossing over; it is stepping over a

threshold. It is acknowledging what is already happening inside. It is our sacraments, baptism. They are all rituals that symbolize in the exterior world something that has already happened or is happening. Through a ritual, I think it is an inner stirring for paying attention. It is the one that says it is time.

[Being a crone] feels like myself. It feels like the work I am given to do at this point in life. So it just feels like I'm living out part of the giftedness that I brought to the planet. All I need to do is show up speak my truth and the results are not mine. If people heed it, fine, if they don't that is fine too. The outcome of my life is not mine. It is only that I am true to myself.

Isis explains the crone's inner stirring and how becoming the crone is a process that

depends upon the maiden and mother.

*When we are in the crone, we probably are not doing as much **externally** as when we are in the maid and mother. I think the crone is much more internal.*

The three archetypes are maiden, mother and crone. The maiden is trying to find her way, doesn't really know yet. The maiden, her work is mainly to figure out what are her gifts and what are her limitations. She is being called to[know] how to use her gifts in this world that is her primary work. It is developing her own self, if she hasn't done that she is not going to be able to do the work of the mother or the crone.

The mother has sort of figured that out, she has made a commitment to bring a child into the world or it could be to do some creative project. The mother is sort of the generous yes, because she has a new life there, she doesn't really have a choice if she is going to save that life or if the life is going to thrive. She might be a writer, she might be an artist, and it is not necessarily having physical children. It can be creative projects and is how she believes she should use her gifts. She is "other" centered on this new creation that she is bringing in into life. It is nurturing things.

The crone is finished with that work and now her work extends way beyond the family. She is looking at the whole picture, what is good for the whole not just my immediate family. I know what my gifts are and I don't have to waste a lot of energy and talk because I am inner-directed. So I get my energy and I get my insights from deep within. And out here, all the chatter out here influences me a lot less. With the crone, the crone is comfortable saying no or deciding if this is something I want to do or don't want to do. I am really awake, not being motivated by my

> *unconscious ego that could be fear driven. So she [the crone] is open hearted, but she recognizes nonsense, when she hears it.*

Isis describes the significance of the earth community and how that ties into the

crone:

> *I think often times her world becomes much bigger, it is not just the family anymore. It's much broader; it's kind of the human community, the earth community.*

> *There is only one life that we all participate within and what happens to the planet and to all the beings on the planet affects us. I mean we are poisoning our home, the planet, we are poisoning other beings. We don't see them as having value. If we don't wake up we will destroy ourselves, and the crone sees that. When you get to this point in life [crone age], you really don't care what people think. Anybody that doesn't care about what people think is very dangerous.*

Isis explains about the demonizing of older women in culture that she continues to

observe. She argues that society writes women off and has linked words that reflect

contempt or disapproval to older women.

> *It just keeps coming up. I think we demonize aging or the elderly and I think it is not really true.*

> *Ageism is pretty common in our society. We write old women off and they are [perceived] as subversive. The truth of the matter is that they [society] are terrified of us. Older women who really don't care what you think anymore are really dangerous.*

> *I think there is a lot of fear behind the writing us off. If they write us off, they don't have to take us seriously. But the truth of the matter is that deep down, I think there is a real fear of the old women. Why have we turned old hag into in such a **pejorative** word? Crone into such a **pejorative** word? Witch into such a pejorative word? It is all based on fear!*

Isis believes that women need to value themselves just the way we are:

> *Until women truly love themselves and realize they have value for just who they are, not what they do, but just who they are. We'll never do the work that we have come here to do. If I don't love myself, I can't really love another. If I don't value myself, I cannot really value another.*

The work always begins with the one and there are a lot of folks who haven't done their work yet. I think there is a great fear to go inside, a fear that we won't find anything. Which is not true and all society has convinced us [of that]. Listen to our advertising, in order to be something you have to buy this product. Those are all lies that people have been brainwashed to believe they are true. It has nothing to do with the car I drive, with the salary I get, the degrees I have.

*Some of the wisest people in the **world** have not been to school. All of that exterior, which our society demands to show that I am important, does not change my value one bit. All the adulation in the world doesn't increase it. All the negativity in the world doesn't decrease it, doesn't **touch** it. With what you think of me or don't think of me, doesn't change my value. How many women think they have no value? So their value is outside of themselves.*

*With the crone, she is really doing her work, her value is inside. It has **nothing** to do with the outside world. We come into this world whole and complete at our core we are divine. Nothing can change that.*
So I think our work is right now to wake-up we are pretty much asleep. It is to wake-up to who we really are at our core. We really are a manifestation of the divine of God in this body, clothed like this. If we don't get that we will destroy our selves.

Threads uncovered from Isis. The crone archetype is crone energy. This energy cannot be explained and is ultimately a mystery. Isis sees crone energy as dipping into our wisdom that is intuition and that may come from the heart. It is an inner stirring to seek out one's true self. To become a crone is a process where it is necessary to complete the work of the maiden and mother first. Isis sees that the work of the maiden to find her gifts and learn how to use them. The mother is "other-centered" and is focused on nurturing. The crone's work is to look at the bigger picture and to tap into her insights that speak her truth. The crone energy, because it is connected to everything, sees the poisoning of earth and speaks out against this. Isis believes that society is afraid of women's intuitive way of knowing and has therefore attempted to write women off. There is the fear that women know things that cannot be explained. This is especially the

case for older women who are demonized by society and are referred to by pejorative

names, such as old hag, crone, and witch.   Isis believes that at the core we are made

whole, we are divine, and women need to value themselves just the way they are.

Julia

> *The crone represents the **end** of the cycle and the **seed** for the next.*
> *The **feminine** is the earth.*
> *The Goddess **needs** to come out because of the recklessness. - Julia*

Julia describes herself. She is 67 years old. She describes herself as a female and

Caucasian.

Julia describes her crone images. Julia describes three images of the crone that

she identifies with: the Celtic Bear Goddess, Sophia the owl, and the Triple Goddess with

the phoenix rising. She describes what Sophia represents to her in the form of a collage

image that Julia created herself:

> *My goddess images are my soul cards [collages]. The first image is rather a conglomeration of a woman [pictured in a library slumped over asleep] who is absolutely sick and tired of research or she has read and read and read and tried to fill her whole mind with all this stuff. She is **tired** and her brain is tired.*

> *Sophia, who is represented by the owl, is just standing **over** her telling her that wisdom doesn't really come from this. Wisdom comes from experience and life and not just from those images of [what] the books [represent]. That is sort of my Sophia image, because **I** am guilty of doing all that, what the library looks like, I have books everywhere (Julia laughs). So in a way it's kind of a self-knowledge that there's more than this.*

> *Sophia is an inner knowledge and an inner knowing. Wisdom comes from experience and from the senses and intuition, it comes from everywhere. The books are a way that we can sometimes think we can feed our mind. Wisdom comes from **our selves.** It is related to the crone because trusting the inner knowing happens when one has a certain amount of life experiences. There comes a time when we get over our self-doubts and self-consciousness. This is when wisdom comes.*

Julia explains the metaphor of the books and where knowledge is assumed to come from

based on objective reasoning that discounts the intuitive feminine way of knowing.

> *Since the so called "Period of Enlightenment", so much emphasis has been placed on "objective" reasoning and the scientific method in Western culture. This is purely an intellectual exercise that discounts the intuitive way of knowing. The whole **discounting** of intuition and of other ways of learning and knowing [in comparison to] the whole book knowledge and intellect has become [a way to] rationalize everything. That is sort of the masculine way that the patriarchy, I don't want use patriarchy per se, but it's thrown the feminine and the masculine out of balance. Here I am associating intuition with feminine and intellectual with masculine. Because to me the feminine is **not** just the mind, it **is** in fact coming from all of the other places. I mean there is something you **just know**. You have **no** idea where it came from, but you do know.*

> *This whole concept that [the library and books as metaphors] is the place you can learn everything there is to know and gain wisdom. I have been worn out by **places** that think rational thought is the only way to go. With our rational thought we end up not believing things that come to us, our second guessing. Some of this is a reaction to where research is based on using the "scientific method" to prove every conclusion. Somehow to think that experiments can bring conclusive results as if, any part of life can be held constant.*

Julia describes the intuitive feminine way of knowing as that which cannot be

measured in objective terms. The discounting of the feminine way of knowing

has resulted in women being undervalued in society.

> *Sometimes things just come to you by accident. This is the whole notion of synchronicity. [For example,] people showing up because they are supposed to, and the time is right, you know. To take it a bit further, that is what we **know** and can put in a book, I mean you can **visually see.** At certain wave lengths we can **hear,** but other wave lengths are **higher** and **lower** than what we perceived in any manner. So what **happens** [outside] a range that we perceive with our five senses? A perfect example of this is when somebody had tape-recording sounds. They were listening to the tape and nothing happened. Somebody put it on the wrong speed and all of a sudden there are all these sounds that they couldn't hear [before]. At a different frequency they could hear them. So what is that **saying** to us? There is a **whole** world out there that we can't perceive.*

*Western culture does not want to accept as "real" yet, there may be things happening right before your eyes that you cannot see, because it is out of range of human perception. How can anyone account for the healing power of prayer, yet experiments have shown that it is real. How is it that we have come to the notion that all knowledge **comes** from what we can see and what we can hear. I think that sometimes things come to us without our knowing. Where they come from is a **mystery**. It is a huge mystery and the big miracle.*

*One image of the crone or feminine wisdom or feminine goddess is the **Goddess** that lives within us. How we let her out or not, she's still there. Things attributed to the feminine are still undervalued and women have accepted this too. I think that women in general have been told which of the goddesses are actually **valued** and which have not. It seems like the crone has been long **undervalued** (Julia laughs) in society.*

Julia explains how she views the sacred feminine and describes how she finds

society typically distorts the feminine image:

*I have always loved mythology. I think it has taken me awhile to realize that they [the goddesses] were [in] me, that they weren't outside. They are **us**. It was a part of who we are. It was part of their first **psychology** after all. Our behavior falls into those patterns. I think they [goddesses] are useful because you **can** see yourself and you **can** understand.*

*I have looked at the sacred feminine for a long time. It seems that the feminine has been distorted in a lot of ways. In the media and advertising, the feminine images that seem acceptable, or at least honored in our culture, are the mother and the maiden. Other forms are considered either evil (the witch) or unclean (the whore). Beautiful young women are used as heroines, sex symbols, etc. in advertising and movies, while old or heavy or "ugly" women are ignored or marginalized. The sex symbol, although very visible, is also put down and scapegoated. "Successful" women tend to be those who can demonstrate masculine qualities, such as aggression and competition. The **older** you get, especially in our society, the more invisible you become, the less you are valued.*

[Julia reads a poem she has written about the crone]

Goddess I

You do not fit in
A culture of youth
Tender budding tits
Wrinkle free hands
Such a fleeting time

Beauty without substance
Now, I am substance without beauty
Funny life
It leads us here
And then challenges us
To do something
We inherited a time when recklessness
Is fatal
And so many are reckless
Yet the real wisdom
Is unrecognized
Marginalized
In old crone bodies

*If that's what happens to women in this society, you know, **the goddess needs to come out because of the recklessness**. I think it really is up to us to let her out. To somehow **claim** the wisdom we have, to somehow **put** it out there. Because in a lot of ways (pause) this society we live in is so driven with competition and all of those other things that put one person against the other. You are either a winner or a loser kind of thing. That is not what the **feminine** is about. The crone is **not** about that. The crone is more about cooperation and **nurturing** and recognizing value in other things and in other people.*

[Julia explains what she means by the word recklessness in her poem]

*Well, we are in war in Afghanistan. What's that about? We have gun control laws that are absolutely **crazy** that put guns in the hands of children and criminals. There is no such thing as public transportation when the amount of energy used by single occupancy vehicles is damaging to our children's futures. We poison our food [in the example of:] toxic substances are used to kill weeds and insects; and cattle are fed antibiotics and hormones so they will grow faster. These ultimately carry a health risk for people. Recklessness for the sake of having atomic energy when there is no place to store the dispensed fuel cells that will remain radioactive for thousands of years. The recklessness in [creating] genetically modified seeds, because there is such a small picture. If I do this and it produces a better seed, say, and I get a better yield. That's good, but it doesn't **matter** if the human body doesn't recognize it. Now you've caused all these health problems for people (e.g. celiac disease is probably caused by genetically modified seeds). Genetically modified **grain** has gotten to the point where the human body hardly understands it anymore. So we do this reckless stuff (Julia laughs). **It is reckless!***

***So that's reckless**!*

Julia explains the significance of the Triple Goddess image with the phoenix

rising:

> *The Triple Goddesses are stirring the pot and the phoenix is rising. What was important in this [image] was that they are dancing around a pot and what is coming out of the pot is the phoenix. The phoenix is representing the feminine or the feminine goddess and how I think she needs to rise. It represents the **Goddess** in all of her parts and has to be reborn and to fly again.*
>
> *As women mature, they go from maiden to mother to crone and that is the symbol of the Triple Goddess. But, there are parts of the maiden that do not go away when one becomes a mother and the mother does not go away when one becomes a crone. Each Goddess is archetypal and more than one lives within me all the time.   Even images of the crone come in a variety of Goddesses, not just one.   So, sometimes I am needing courage, sometimes I need creative juices to flow, sometimes I need to be active and move forward, sometimes I need to just sit with an idea. So, I can call upon the appropriate Goddess to help me, depending on where I am at any given time.*
>
> *The crone represents the **end** of the cycle and the **seed** for the next. If you have a garden, then in the end you know you got dead things. Because in all this **rot** is in fact what the new life comes up in. You bury them so that next year you can have something. You harvest the seeds and that's what renews itself. Life **gives** us endings and often those endings are uncomfortable*
>
> *What grows on the **inside** becomes **far** more beautiful. It's not **empty** anymore it's filled with **experiences** and **wisdom.** I've always thought that grandparents should raise children because they are so much better at it as they have had the experience after all. Whatever they learned would be recycled back into the younger people (laughter).*

Julia describes another image of the crone that she is currently identifying with. Julia

describes the Celtic Bear Goddess Artio from a collage she has made:

> *The current goddess that I am going to live with is Artio. She is an ancient Goddess and her name means bear. She is probably a predecessor to the Roman Diana or the Greek Artemis. She is also the Wisdom Goddess or Goddess of the Shaman, because the bear hibernates and gives birth basically when it's in hibernation. When she comes out in the spring after **hibernation** she comes out and brings the cubs with her. **Symbolically,** any creativity is associated with that bringing forth children*

*or cubs, bringing forth creative **ideas.** Your ideas and your creativity need time to gestate as well. In order to get to it [creativity] you **need** to metaphorically go into yourself. That is where it lies.*

She is the goddess of courage and is known for her fierce and courageous protection of her young, also protection of all animals and plants of the forest. In mythology the bear was put up into the heavens. She is associated with the Big Dipper, where part of the constellation points to the North or Polar Star. Of course the North Star has been used for navigation forever As a metaphor, the goddess does guide your journeys, your shamanistic journeys, your journeys into your own creativity.

*Part of my reason for doing the bear is because I have also been exploring genealogy. I was looking where part of my roots come from and [discovered] a group of people who they called the Forest Finns, Finnish people who moved into Sweden and Norway. They were kind of an underclass, but as I was doing genealogy on these people they were interesting to me. They had their shamans and their separate beliefs. In one of the books there was something written about my great great great great great grandfather who had killed 67 bears and was known as a hero bear fighter. The bear has always been my power animal when I go on a journey (meditation journey). The bear is **with** me. That was before I knew the rest of this other story. Part of it is the exploration to where is that connection. So, it is a connection both backwards and forward in a way [through time].*

*I am working on Artio. It's time in my life. I really need to dig from within me to whatever my song is inside. I am really looking for a new way to be in the world, perhaps using art or design or poetry to put a voice to who I am. I am trying right now to actually **write** more poetry and also I think there desperately needs to be more eco-feminism, protection of the earth, the plants, and animals that live on earth. I think I need her because I need some help with where I'm going to fit in with that. I mean the feminine **has** to come out, she has to come **out,** or we're dead.*

I see the feminine or goddess as being needed to come out in order to restore balance in a world that is now out of balance. By out of balance, Western culture does not see the earth as a living organism, but only as a resource to be used. Eco-systems are damaged, habitat destroyed, forests burned down, [all] for the sake of wealth accumulation. People with narrow visions are making decisions that permanently change natural systems, without any concept of consequences.

Reckless behavior.

*The **feminine** is the earth! If you don't **value** the feminine, you don't value the earth. If you don't **value** everything that the goddess **represents** and if the goddess is the earth - I mean how **long** the patriarchy has gone **conquering**. It's this **fight against nature** and nature has a perfect balance.*

Threads uncovered from Julia. Julia is tired and worn out of the ideal that society accepts only the Western way of thinking that is based on objective reasoning and the scientific method. She sees it as a way to rationalize what is considered knowledge that excludes what we cannot measure or observe with our senses and the feminine intuitive way of knowing. This has resulted in discounting the feminine way of knowing which has led to undervaluing women and where the feminine image has been distorted by culture. Julia believes that wisdom comes from experience and inner knowing – from intuition and from our senses. There is a whole world that exists outside our senses that we cannot perceive. We are at a point where we are destroying the earth and misusing her resources and this is reckless. Because of this recklessness, Julia believes the Goddess needs to come out to restore balance and cooperation that nurtures the earth. The feminine is the earth. The crone is a metaphor for the end of the cycle and seed for the next cycle. Julia is called by her crone to do something about the recklessness. The calling inward is the call to bring forth creative ideas. Julia has reclaimed the feminine way of knowing as a valid and as a result is honoring her inner creativity.

Lisa

Does not wisdom call – Proverbs 8:1

If I pay attention, the answers will be revealed to me. - Lisa

Lisa describes herself. She is a 60 year old Caucasian female. She grew up in Wisconsin. She has lived either in Wisconsin or Minnesota her whole life. She has a BS

in Education, AS in Dental Hygiene, and a MA in Theology. She is a Certified Spiritual

Director. She works with her husband in their own insurance agency. She has been

married for over 39 years and has one grown son who is married and has no plans for

children. Lisa has two sisters. She was raised Presbyterian. She joined the Catholic

Church as an adult. Currently, she is not affiliated with any organized church. She

considers herself a Christian, but maybe not an orthodox Christian. She has a strong

interest in Shamanism and Celtic Spiritual traditions.

Lisa describes her crones. There are several different crone images that Lisa has

on her altar. A collage above the altar on the wall contains many symbols for Lisa:

> *The moon cycles are a reminder about the feminine cycles, an older*
> *woman represents the depth of her wisdom in the roots of the tree, an owl*
> *is about wisdom, a women half underground is reaching for the gift from*
> *the spirit, and the Bible verse from Proverb* [which calls Lisa to pay
> attention].

Lisa has a few other images that represent the crone. They are two ancient dolls, an

image of *Lucretia* Mott, and the Grandmothers.   Lisa describes the ancient dolls on her

altar and why she resonates with them:

> *I bought two dolls at an art fair. In order to make them my own, I needed*
> *to name them and say who they were. They actually look like cave women,*
> *but they are very old. I named each one of them after a Celtic tree,*
> *Blackthorn and Rowan.*
>
> *The Celtic symbolism of the trees is represented by the Ogham alphabet,*
> *where each tree has an energy. It is partly a crone type of energy. The*
> *tree alphabet was a symbolic language used by the druids. Each letter is*
> *represented by a tree and the characteristics have a message or meaning.*
>
> *One of the dolls is dark. I call her Betsy Blackthorn. Betsy was my first*
> *dog. Betsy Blackthorn represents difficulties that can't be avoided [things*
> *out of my control], which can lead me to a new direction in life if I draw*
> *on my spiritual strength and accept change.*

> *Then the other doll is light haired. Rowan The Spirit Dancer reminds me to rely on my own sense of what is helpful and what is harmful, then turn away from what threatens my spiritual journey.*

Lisa explains the significance of the dolls for her:

> *The thing about Blackthorn is that stuff happens that I **can't** control. One of the things that I grew up with is the more I control, the safer I am. That is what I **thought** and that's one of the things I had to **unlearn**. You go **crazy** trying to control **stuff** (Lisa laughs). It is **not** my fault and I am **not** going to control it. But that doesn't mean it's going to do me in. So, that is what the blackthorn [represents] - You don't have a choice on what you can control.*

> *Rowan the Spirit Dancer [represents] some stuff I **can** control - I **can** influence. I can keep my wits about myself, because I can pay attention and make my choices - if there's some harm that I can avoid. Some things are **within** my choice and some things are not.*

Lisa describes another crone image on her alter. Lisa has had a long relationship with

Lucretia Mott, a Quaker woman active in the Abolitionist movement for women's rights.

Lucretia worked closely with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a leading figure of the early

women's movement.

> *Lucretia Mott was working alongside Elizabeth Cady Stanton and all those folks. The thing about her, she was quietly in the background through her whole life, working on equality for people's rights and black's rights.*

> *I think one of the things about the crone is that as I become a crone, [I realized that] I am not changing into another kind of person. The same aspects that I have had throughout my whole life are the ones I bring to my age. I get to have more time and energy to give to them [the crone].*

> *The crone aspect of Lucretia Mott is that she kind of quietly was working in the background. There are some things I identify with her. She didn't draw a lot of attention to herself, but still she was very strong, she was very independent. She thought outside the box. She was thinking differently than a lot of other people [in her time], she was quite a liberal Quaker. She believed people have rights, religious rights, and religious freedom. The other thing about her is that she was married and raised a family.*

[Lisa cites a quote of Lucretia's that she resonates with]: "In a true marriage relationship, the independence of the husband and wife is equal. Their dependence mutual and their obligation reciprocal"

Lisa describes how Lucretia's quote resonates with her and how she felt first learning

about her:

The first time I heard about her was during a women's spirituality course in my master's program and she just kind of grabbed me. She believed in women's rights and in voting rights for blacks. At the same time she was in a marriage and had a relationship of equals with her husband. Plus she understood that not only are we equal, we depend on each other, and we owe each other something. That is not always easy to do. I am a feminist and at the same time I am married. So that is one of things I identify with her.

*Some circle of friends that I have been in, the women in the group had ended up getting divorced. It is almost like they couldn't be themselves and be married. How do you **stay** yourself and be married? It is not just a crone thing but it's hard to find that kind of support (Lisa laughs). When I look at Lucretia Mott, she lived a long time ago and she got that thing and knowing that is affirming to me. I am **dependent** on my husband and he is dependent upon me and we **owe** each other something and we also have our independence from each other.*

It is almost like a reaction because of the patriarchy and trying to mold ourselves into being physically what men wanted or they thought they wanted. Well then, you have to totally go outside that in order to be yourself. Everyone loses when that kind of a system is going.

Lucretia's image becomes a defining moment for Lisa when she is asked to dress and

speak as Lucretia at a woman's event. She describes how that moment felt for her:

I made myself a costume like her. I made her hat by hand just by looking at the picture [of Lucretia Mott] without a pattern. I actually felt like Lucretia was with me when I was making this. When I put it on [the bonnet] I feel like I am sharing a part of her and she is sharing a part of herself with me. I don't think I could have made this hat look this good without having an experience of her.

*When I read about her and when I was speaking like her, it was a really **cool** experience. She was just as important as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, but her name wasn't out there. She helped organize, but you hear about the other women. You don't hear about her.*

*I think how I felt [presenting Lucretia] was sort of an affirmation for myself, of **my** aspects that I can be quiet. I don't like to draw attention to myself and yet I'm strong. I feel safer blending into the background. I always have and I used to think that was wrong. You can get a lot done without drawing attention to yourself. Whatever I'm doing (Lisa laughs) and you could do less because you are married and raising a family. But that doesn't detract from what you are doing is right for you. I used to feel if you are a feminist and you're a strong woman and you're intelligent, you are a leader and you should be out there confronting people. That is **NOT** her way [Lucretia].*

Lisa resonates deeply with Lucretia Mott as a crone figure who is there for her by example. However, it is Lisa's grandmothers that she calls on in time of need. Lisa describes how she resonates with her grandmothers:

My grandmother or the women who are my ancestors, I sort of lump them together. When I think of the grandmothers as a group, they went through hard times and they got through it. Sometimes when I feel discouraged or I'm not getting anywhere or this is just too hard. I think of [how] they got through it, and I'll get through it too. What I feel like is they are pulling for me. It is like we did it, you can do it too!

One of things that helps me a lot, as far as my grandmothers or like Lucretia Mott, is reading their words. It is like you can hear their voices. I guess how they pull for me. I believe that if I ask for information from the universe, from specifically my ancestor, and if I pay attention, the answers will be revealed to me. So it might be just a door open or an opportunity comes by or I just have a sense or feeling. But I don't take it lightly and I don't do this flippantly - If I really feel like I am stuck and I need some help - the grandmothers - the crones - are the ones that I feel the strongest connection with as far as getting their help.

One way Lisa has connected with her grandmothers is through what she calls soul collage cards that she has created from a workshop. The card representing her maternal grandmother communicates to her the *importance of learning and using her intelligence and honoring her intelligence.* The one Lisa created for her great grandmother reminds her of *unconditional love*, in knowing that her great grandmother persevered amidst great

challenges. Lisa explains the energy connection she has with her grandmother's soul

cards she created.

> *When I do a soul collage card for one of my grandmothers it's the energy that looking at her picture communicates to me. When you put an image down the reason you are choosing that image is because it has an energy, and it is reminding you of the person. When I look at that picture I experience that energy - that overlap of the energy what I share with them or what they are sharing with me.*

For Lisa, she finds that she now has the time to spend in her sacred room to connect with

her grandmothers or her other crones. She has learned to pay attention, which is her

spiritual practice that has given her great wisdom. Lisa explains how this has evolved

over time for her:

> *It seems like it took years for me to get to the place where I believed I **deserved** to take the time to do this. I just wasn't aware of the grandmothers or Lucretia Mott and all of them until I was older. Because I didn't take the time or believe or I guess it took a long time to believe that I deserved to let myself have **this** (Lisa laughs).*

> *My spiritual practice is really paying attention. I don't like meditation. It is knowing that there is foreground and background and it is always there. I'm living in the foreground all the time. I go to work, but that background is always there, I'm not conscious of it. When I come into this room all I have to do is look out the window and it sort of reminds me there is a background. There is something deeper behind the surface that is going on. I remember that there is background and that is when I am conscious of whether it is the grandmothers or whoever. That they are there for me.*

Lisa specifically brings up the topic about the lack of listening to older women in our

culture, how this has defined how older people retire.

> *I don't think older women get listened to. We **have** all this wisdom. We **have** all this experience, but we don't get asked or we don't get believed. [The younger generation] **discount** what has happened before because they think that nothing good could have happened in the past. [For example], I'm trying to collect my family history but nobody else in my family is hardly interested at all. All these fabulous stories! Maybe it's partly their age. But still there's not honoring of that older person.*

[The manner in which older people retire seems to prohibit the passing down of wisdom from generation to generation when they used to live together.]

[The generations] are kind of separate too, [no longer living together anymore]. My parents moved to Florida, so they didn't have a relationship with their grandchildren and great grandchildren because they're too far away. But my husband, lived with his mother and his grandmother. So he got some of that wisdom and she influenced how the kids were raised because she was there in the house. [Another example of this is] my dad was raised with his mother and he grew up with her. I think those blended families, multi-generational houses, had more sharing of that wisdom. I think you get exposed to that wisdom and just the stories with generations living together.

The lack of listening to older women in society also creates a sense of invisibility. This is further impacted with society's emphasis on youthfulness. Lisa describes how she has learned to react to both of these issues from a different perspective that has been inspired by the example of Lucretia.

*I do feel kind of invisible in a way. But then maybe that's not like Lucretia Mott. She was kind of invisible too and that didn't mean she was not having an effect. Maybe this is a way of **being** and maybe that is a way that older women can be safe too. There is some safety in being invisible. Only be invisible when you **want** to be. When you choose to be because then you can get a lot done in the background.*

*There is a point, woman if you are older, are not expected to look young anymore. So you don't have to **keep** trying to look young. Why struggle with it and **why** try to be something else. Now I'm over 60 I have an excuse that it doesn't matter. There can be some advantages in that you are older and you are not noticed and maybe you can get something done that way too.*

Threads uncovered from Lisa. The crone images that Lisa resonates with have taught her to affirm her way of being and who she is. These aspects have always been a part of Lisa and she now finds the time and sacred space to honor herself as a crone. Lisa's spiritual practice is paying attention and making choices that honor her sacred

path. She believes her crone images will reveal the answers she seeks. Lisa's crone

images remind her to let go of the things she cannot control and accept the change. This

is the cycle of transformation that enters her into a new phase of renewal.   Lisa finds

great strength in her connections/relationships and feels the responsibility to take care of

these as a reciprocal obligation to maintain balance. Her connections to her crones are

also based on an overlapping or sharing of energy between herself and her crones in the

form of their images or words. Lisa does not believe that society honors wisdom from

older women and the sharing of this wisdom is no longer done through multi-generational

families living together.   As an older woman herself, Lisa feels she is invisible.

However, she finds that in this manner she thinks she can get stuff done in the

background by not being visible. By resonating with her crone images, Lisa has

reclaimed and honored her way of being.

Wanbli

> *She has given me the courage to grow into myself. To taking my own*
> *power on. She is going into the darkness and brings the light back. She*
> *holds the space open, safety for the underworld – the deepest part of*
> *ourselves. - Wanbli*

   Wanbli describes herself. She is just over 70 years old. She was an owner,

broker, and investor in residential real estate until she retired. She has lived most of her

life in Minnesota. She has eight children and 15 grandchildren. She also is an astrologer

and herbalist. She has been a participant in a meditation group for years as well as a

drum and journey group. She loves to write poetry. Most of all, she is a seeker. She is

always looking for ways to deepen her active participation in ways of the spirit.

   Wanbli describes her crone. Wanbli identifies with the Celtic Cerridwen as her

crone image. A significant aspect of Cerridwen is that she is a shape-shifter and

represents the Triple Goddess. *She is known as the hag, the witch, the crone,[and] the*

darkness. Wanbli also resonates with the Indigenous Corn Maiden Kachina and has worn

a corn talisman for some time. Wanbli describes Cerridwen's story:

> *I was attracted to the goddess Cerridwen for several reasons. She is rather like a Triple Goddess in that she not only represents the maiden, mother, and crone, she is the Goddess of the cauldron.*

> *Part of her story is that she had birthed a male and a female. The male is quite ugly and didn't have a lot of knowledge. So she put in the cauldron this magic potion and brewed it for one year and one day. The magical potion and herbs symbolizes inspiration and knowledge. This was going to give him **knowledge** and transform his **life**. The cauldron is also about transforming. So she's cooking her magic potion up and she left it to a helper, Gwion. He was stirring the potion and right when it was done he accidently splashed three drops on his hand licked it off and immediately became **transformed**. The pot **exploded**! She was **furious**!*

> *She[Cerridwen] came in and says, "What did you do with my son?" She took after him and he transformed and she transformed. They shape-shifted and he kept shape-shifting and she would shape-shift after him.*

> *Finally after he was exhausted, he shape-shifted into a grain of corn and she transformed herself into a very hungry hen (researcher laughs). The hen [Cerridwen] preceded to eat up all the grain, including Gwion [now a grain of corn]. Then she became pregnant with this grain that she ingested, this piece of **corn**, and nine months later gave birth to a transformed **beautiful** young man named Taliesen. Later, Taliesen became recognized as the great **Bard/poet**. She birthed the bard and the poet, he was transformed in the womb. I have always loved to write poetry, so that kind of resonated with me. In this example, Cerridwen provides for her children by using her inner power and wisdom. She creates her own destiny. She gifts us with strength to accept our own power and shape our own lives.*

> *One of the other parts of [Cerridwen story], was before when her first born son, the one that was very ugly that was born. She was boiling her pot, she reached into the pot and pulled out the son that had also became the **SUN**. She is the goddess of the darkness and by pulling this out, she was pulling back the sun and it was the day of great darkness. It was December 21st. The power of darkness was needed to bring forth Cerridwen's inspiration. Darkness is the state of procreation, the void from which all things come forth.*

There are many aspects of Cerridwen's story that resonate with Wanbli. She specifically

connects several coincidental events and startling similarities to her life and the story of

Cerridwen.

> One of her stories that struck me as being coincidental to my **own** life is that I do make herbs, tinctures, and salves. And I found a picture of myself as I've been cooking up these things – wow! This is kind of like what they used to do a long time ago. So using things from the earth, natural things have been part of me for a really long time. Many years ago I was drawn to a large black metal pot in my possession, an old cauldron with three-legs on the bottom. The cauldron is symbolic for me of my tincture-making and salve-making with fresh herbs from my garden.

> Also, one of my friends, Matthew Wood, has written several books on herbalism and was one of my first teachers. He is very intuitive, very much of a healer and he talks about plants in their spirit form. They are obviously alive and alive in a whole different way. What does their spirit tell you? What can they do for your body? What can they do for your emotions? When I was a girl I used to rip bark off trees, pluck plants up, and chew on them (Wanbli laughs). People would say, "Stop, you'll poison yourself! [I responded] **No** I won't! The first time I went to Matthew's class I laughed and said now I know [where the interest in herbs came from].

> [The part of Cerridwen birthing a son/sun] on December 21st, wow and that struck me as odd because I birthed a son on December 21st. I didn't know that until I **identified** with her [Cerridwen] for other reasons. I began to read about her and develop an affinity, well what a coincidence.

> A couple of smaller things is that my birthday is in January at the dark time of the year. I was born in the time of no moon. Cerridwen is the goddess of the darkness bringing symbolically back the moon. Within her cauldron she brings back the light and birthed the sun. She goes deep into the darkness of the underworld and she brings also the light of the moon back. I was born when the moon was void, very early in the morning. It was during a black moon. That coincidence of me being born in January in the dark time also resonated with me.

> Also, the fact that I need to go into a quiet time to get my energy and my vitality back. I kind of crawl into that cave – the time of the dark moon. I also resonated really with that too, you know, it felt comfortable - that felt familiar to me.

Wanbli explains another startling similarity she discovered with Cerridwen and

identifying with her as the Goddess of Grain.

> *She is the Goddess of the Grain because she consumed the grain of corn that became Gwion. [Wanbli describes the necklace that she wears daily.] This is my **oldest** [necklace] and favorite talisman, a stalk of corn. I have had it for 25 years and I wear it all the time. I had no knowledge until I was reading about Cerridwen her affinity to the corn. Oh my goodness, she's the Goddess of the Grain. I liked the idea that the grain of corn represents fertility and abundance.*

> *Also, I think I respect **deeply** how the American Indigenous have a great reverence for the things of the earth. [Comparing Cerridwen to Indigenous traditions] That's another piece, **wow** I didn't realize that I have a small Kachina, she is the **corn** maiden. She is like a small sacred doll, this was with the Hopi Nation. The **corn** is a central symbol in **so** many indigenous peoples. The Kachina represents the fertility piece.*

Wanbli explains how she resonates with the shape-shifting aspects of Cerridwen:

> *There has been so many times and places in my life that I have felt that I am a totally different person. I almost have shape-shifted and maybe changing into something totally different. When I write I feel like I'm a different person. When I was a mother or a grandmother, another part of me comes out. That has always been kind of a **piece** of me that I felt was **part** of me. I don't act differently, but it pulls in a different piece of me.*

> *As I age, first you are the maiden and I merged into motherhood in a great way. I have a large family, we have eight children and 15 grandchildren. The physical piece of that is there, but the **mothering** is different than being the maiden. Then as I evolved into going through menopause, changing and then taking on the crone. **One part doesn't go away**, it just kind of melts together. It becomes the attributes from the maiden to the mother going into what I feel is my crone. I think one of the things that I have noticed most is being able to take a breath and sit back, instead of reacting right away.*

> *Somehow, and I don't know if it's Cerridwen and her way of going into the darkness, but being able to not react to so quickly, sit back, **feel** what that energy feels like before I react. I didn't feel that certainly as a maiden and not so much as a mother.*

Cerridwen's cauldron resonates with Wanbli greatly, partly coincidental and but also

representative of transformation in the cycles of life and going inward to the shadow side

of ourselves. Wanbli explains the cycle of transformation in more detail and how this

relates to the Triple Goddess:

> *One of the other things Cerridwen represents is the change of the seasons. I've always loved the change of the seasons! I love the slow change of **light,** the whole **piece** of it. I resonate with that part of it. I realize that it is relating to Cerridwen in that way, again was something we have a kinship. Cerridwen is the keeper of the cauldron, which is the gateway of both death and life. The cauldron is the womb, a feminine symbol, and it also the growth and transformation – the life/death/life cycle.   It is like going from one to the next to the other, a continual circle. It is that circle that doesn't stop and the cauldron is the circle.*
>
> *Part of that was a reminder to me that things never stay still. When I have had horrible events, things that are falling apart around me and illnesses. Whatever happens I **finally learned** that it's not going to stay that way. It always moves around and shifts. That shape-shifter, the changing, **all** is a piece of that circle of **whole**.*
>
> *Cerridwen is not the only mythological goddess that represents the Triple Goddess. There are several that do and it's about the birthing, going through life, aging and dying. It's the process of maiden, mother and crone. It is also about birthing and the age cycle as well. So in a **way** it's the transformation piece of it. Because you **are** going from one to the next to the other. When you **birth** you transform from when you **die,** you are going into a different cycle. Because she [Cerridwen] holds that cauldron of death and **life**, she is very much a piece of bringing the light back. Because it is a continuum, it doesn't **stop,** doesn't **end,** so it is a re-birth of some sort. Here in Minnesota we have all this **life** and it's sleeping right now (Wanbli chuckles) **waiting** to come back. [Since it is winter.]*
>
> *We see that slow process of coming back again. It's **dormant** and so is death dormant – that it is a resting time to do something else. [It symbolizes] the underworld, of journeying to the deepest part of ourselves. The deepest part of myself is going down into the hidden parts that don't want to come out. Where I need to urge them to come out. That underworld being the deepest part of my unconscious. I think it's that hidden part of myself. I am interested in what my dreams tell me and when I do some journeying there is always a safety there for me.   I have not had any bad experiences there. I think sometimes we are told we should **fear** that part, that darkness. You know all these movies and plays are about the darkness and creatures or evil. But it's really just the other side of the lightness, it's the shadow part and the **hidden** part. So wouldn't we want to know what's hidden there?*

*She [Cerridwen] is the one that I think to **me** is one of the goddesses that holds the space open. I suppose the cauldron could be holding the space open for the **safety** of that underworld, time of darkness and the dream time. If I'm troubled or want to have answers or in journeying I **want** to be able to feel **safe.** I **want to know** that I'm not floating out there in the void like an un-tethered balloon whipping around in the universe (laughter). I want to know that there is someone holding the space open for me so that I can safely explore and look for answers and ask for answers. Cerridwen represents that part of that for me. She is **definitely** a protector of the underworld.*

Wanbli reflects about transforming from maiden to mother to crone and how her life

cycle has helped her grow into herself:

*As the maiden, there is that certain sense of adventure, that nothing will ever happen to me. I'll never grow old. I know everything (laughter) and everything is possible. Then I moved into **motherhood**, which was a very busy time physically having a lot of children and all the challenges that go with it. Taking that **vitality** with it but also knowing that maybe I don't know everything. I was beginning to think I didn't know much at all and that's when I started to meet some people that thought like me. I went to a lot of workshops and did a lot of exploring, a lot of **reading.** I began to **peek** out of the box of my very strict Catholic up-bringing.*

*I was **afraid,** I realized when I entered motherhood that I was really afraid to look beyond that because of - mortal sin - go to hell and all that stuff (laughter). That old Baltimore Catechism is just looming in the background. It was a very scary thing, but part of me was saying. This doesn't feel [right]. I started to develop friendships and rituals and ceremonies that allowed me to think beyond. And that was a challenge because my husband is a very conservative man, but over the years we worked a balance out.*

*So as I evolved with that taking that piece of that motherhood part of me, nurturing my family, but also learned that I have to nurture myself. I had to learn the difference between selfish and doing something for **myself** - which is self-survival in a way. I learned that I had to be more than just a mother because part of me needed nurturing and if I didn't nurture then I would not be honoring myself. It was difficult times, a lot of challenges with my husband in that way because there was fear and he thought I was going away from **him.** But he didn't realize that I was growing into myself.*

Then as I merged from the maiden-hood and the mother into the crone, I was able to explore further what cronedom means. A group of women that

*I have been doing meditation with [celebrated] a 60th birthday, welcome to Queendom of Cronedom. I thought it was **wonderful** because it allowed [us] to be **honored**. It was a wonderful way of celebrating cronedom because we don't honor aging in our society.*

Cerridwen *gives me safety, she is gives me the ability to explore and having her hold that open for me, she is giving me that knowledge that you have to have darkness to reflect the light. You have to have both. I **need that** to give me the confidence that I'm to move forward. It's **ok** for me to ask questions. It's **ok** for me to **look** and be comfortable with it. Cerridwen has really given me that **power** to saying **yes** that's ok, that you can do that. I think our society horribly lacks it. I think in many countries the old live with the young together as a family, three and four generations.*

In realizing that she needed to nurture herself through time, Wanbli explains part

of the process:

*It was scary at first frightening because boy you're being selfish. You should just be doing what society told me I should be doing. I should be raising my family and being a good wife. The need was so **strong,** the feeling that **wow,** I'm not really being true to who I am if I ignore that part. So part of that was to examine all the information I got as a young person, going through school. What was real? What was based on guilt? What made me do things because of shame and fear? And I realized that a whole lot of it was about that. Afraid to do this because of punishment, shame, fear, and retribution. Finally I began to realize, really dig deeper because it was my life.*

*Within a nine year period of time I had birthed five children and had four miscarriages. I was told that I should continue doing this. I have to be the good wife and the good Catholic here. I went priest shopping (Wanbli chuckles) and finally found a priest that said [I could use birth control]. I still needed permission back then. It is better to **not** have a child when you can't bring it into the world and have enough room to love that child in the right way. So I began to examine what does that [whole thing about] birth control mean. **What** is that control?*

*I realized I was being **controlled** by a **male** telling me **what I should do** with my **life** and that was a **tremendous** piece of information for me. **Very** empowering for me. I finally sat back and said I **love** all my children, but by golly I won't have a dozen (laughter). Subsequently, I did have by choice my sixth child, but at that time that was because my husband and I **wanted** this, not because [of acting] out of fear. So that*

*was a huge part of the puzzle that was empowering and then I moved on. From **then** I realized that I needed to empower myself.*

*I realized a **huge** difference between religion and spirituality. To me religion said - rules, rules, rules- in a box - we must follow rules. Spirituality said – **everything** - the creator has created everything that is part of this wonderful piece, it's **expansive**. I **jumped** out of the **box** and that was it. I slapped a lid on that religious box and went on to discover for **me,** what religion and what does spirituality mean.*

Threads uncovered from Wanbli. Her crone has given her the courage to grow into herself. To know what is right for Wanbli. Through her crone, Wanbli has found a way to nurture herself. The shape-shifting aspects of Wanbli's crone represent to her the process of becoming or embodying different aspects of herself. She carries with her the other parts of the Triple Goddess, maiden-mother-crone, that melt together and help her transition as she ages. In growing into herself, Wanbli has found safety in that her crone has held open the space for her to seek answers. Her crone represents abundance and fertility and the cycle of transformation – birth/death/life. Transformation requires that we go into the deepest side of ourselves, the shadow side, and from there is where the light is brought back. We are often taught to fear this side of ourselves. Learning to nurture herself through her crone, Wanbli has been greatly empowered to avoid falling into the religious of trap of being controlled through shame, guilt, and fear. By resonating with Cerridwen, Wanbli has been empowered to embody all aspects of her true self.

Discussion

In this chapter I discuss the results and the common threads that were uncovered from the interviews and how they are linked to the literature. This is followed by a discussion of unanticipated discoveries. Several implications of this research are discussed, including implications for holistic health, for the earth community and for further research. The chapter ends with a summary of this research.

The researcher interviewed seven different women who resonated with crone images which brought meaning and purpose to their lives as older women. The women describe their lived experience of resonating or activating with crone archetypal images from their perspective and in their voice. The various crone images that the women resonated with were diverse and compliment the well-known crone archetypal images identified in the literature. The women's images contained the same crone archetypal characteristic forms that are described in the literature, which further demonstrates the diversity in which the crone image can be represented. The most significant finding uncovered from interviewing these women is their deep relationship with their respective crone images and the affirmation it provided to them as older women. The literature describes this relationship, however, it is through the women's story and in their voice that we understand the significance of this relationship.

Common Threads Excavated from the Women's Stories

Four common threads surfaced across the women's interviews. The common threads are: honoring the authentic self, denial of the sacred feminine that has led to demonizing older women, the crone as a metaphor for transformation by going inward, and the crone as a metaphor for transitioning through the cycle of life. These common

threads reflect a web-like connection of their experiences with their own crone images

and also inter-connect with each other in the resonating themes. These threads connect to

the existing literature and collective experience of the women contributes and expands

the literature as well.

      Honoring the authentic self. All seven of the women found that the example of

the crone images they identified with inspired them to honor their true self. In resonating

with their crone's story they were affirmed for who they are and their way of being as

older women. The literature describes the crone as the wise-woman or Goddess of

Wisdom that represents feminine wisdom, intuition, and inner knowing (Bolen, 2001;

Walker, 1996). The crone is synonymous to "Hagia Sophia", Greek for "Holy Wisdom",

referring to the wise-women, and has evolved into the old hag image (Walker, 1985,

1996). These seven women, by resonating with their crone's story, realized their own

insights spoke their truth and by tapping into their own wisdom they were assured that

they were doing the right thing. In reclaiming myths that honor the authentic self, which

has been displaced by the fear and alienation of the feminine side, is restoring the

intrinsic relation of the feminine in the psyche (Kolbenschlag, 1996). The women

interviewed felt the courage to grow into themselves as older women - awake, fully

listening, and accepting. Their identity was their own, they affirmed themselves for who

they are, which allowed them to feel free - *When I connect with Sophia, I can be that free

person* (woman interviewee).

      The sacred feminine denied linked to demonizing older women. The women

interviewed sensed the importance of honoring themselves, especially because they

perceive that society does not value them. Older women and their wisdom are written-off

or discounted; the women feel they are invisible and they do not reflect society's emphasis on youthfulness. No longer taking from the *fountain of youth*, they are distorted and referred to with *pejorative* names that have negative connotations and are intended to put down older women.   They are denoted as old hag, crone, and witch. Initially intended to symbolize "Holy Wisdom" from the Greek "Hagia Sophia" (Walker, 1996), the term has instead evolved into the mean old hag. Folk stories have sanitized and modified this term to meet prescribed negative stereotypes and societal norms for older women (Estés, 1996; Ress, 2006).

The women interviewed link, in some manner, the demonizing of older women to the suppression of the sacred feminine.   The sacred feminine way of knowing is through intuition.   Several of the women interviewed view today's witch as the original "Hagia Sophia" and not the demonized old hag that society constructed. Wise-women were considered healers, passing the knowledge down from generation to generation (Walker, 1985, 1996; Ehrenreich & English, 1973). These wise-women once represented the midwives who were later denoted as witches, brutally burned, and then ostracized from society (Bolen, 2001; Ehrenreich & English, 1973; Kolbenschlag, 1996; Walker 1985, 1996). Despite the history of the church's Inquisition established in 1252, today the same fraction of the church, the Congregation for Doctrine of Faith, appears to be enacting another inquisition-like investigation of North American nuns (Bolen, 2011). Many of the nuns have become healers practicing Reiki, Healing Touch, and Centering Prayer to promote healing and to focus on the presence of God (Bolen, 2011). Perhaps the church may denote them as the modern day witches (Bolen, 2011) or rather they will be known as the "Hagia Sophia" – Holy Women.

The ancients defined women's Mensa as "wise blood" and the older woman who retained her Mensa (post-menopause) was considered to retain her "wise blood" inside, which was symbolized through the wise-old-woman (Bolen, 2001; Ulanov, 1971;Walker 1985, 1996). The Mensa itself for women was a time of going inward and to gather and develop their insights to bring forth outwardly (Ulanov, 1971). The women interviewed believe the feminine represents intuition and the inner way of knowing. In the sacred feminine they find a powerful nurturing image. One woman pointed out that the Greeks defined knowing from inside (intuition) as gnosis in contrast to the knowing from outside (objectively) as logos. It is the logos way of knowing that has become embedded and rationalized as the only way of knowing in our culture, which is commonly referred to as Western thinking. The sage, otherwise known as a wise-person without gender, has been defined in Western terms as scholarly and intelligent (Faber & Mayer, 2009), and therefore has been sanitized to exclude intuition.

The exclusion of the feminine intuitive way of knowing by culture has suppressed the sacred feminine and the feminine spirit (Bolen, 2001; Kolbenschlag, 1996, 2006; Ress, 2006; Ulanov, 1971; Walker, 1985, 1996). When women are not honored through the sacred feminine, society does not value women and demonizing them becomes commonplace (Ress, 2006). The women interviewed believe there is a deep seeded fear by society of the feminine intuitive way of knowing, it cannot be explained under rational objective terms – women just know it. Women who have become empowered through the feminine way of knowing are feared and considered dangerous by society. This has resulted in demonizing older women and referring to them as the old hag or witch.

The crone as a metaphor for transformation. The women interviewed see the

crone archetype as a metaphor for going inward during difficult moments in their lives.

The crone represents being at the crossroads or at a place of major transition where hard

decisions are made. When women are under distress they go inward and bond together.

This is in contrast to the metaphor of transformation based on the concept of the hero's

journey, which happens through separation and individuation (Ray & McFadden, 2001).

The hero's journey is based on a period of discovery outside the community, an opening

up of one's ego to then enter a stage of initiation, subsequently returning to the

community transformed (Campbell, 2008). In contrast, the crone archetypal metaphor of

transformation is represented by going inward (Jung, 1968; Walker, 1996), this infers

aspects of communal and relational concepts that women identify with during periods of

transformation (Bolen, 2001; Ray & McFadden, 2001; Ress, 2006; Ulanov, 1971).

Research in neurochemistry demonstrates that the female brain is geared towards

assessing feelings and processing sensations in the body, promoting communication and

defusing conflict processes (Brizendine, 2006). In comparison, the male brain is geared

towards maintaining status and territory and prone to the "fight or flight" reactions to fear

(Brizendine, 2006).

The women interviewed experienced the cycle of transformation as birthing or a

new phase of renewal. This mirrors the life/death/re-birth cycle that is also present in

nature. It is a process where one needs to let go and not control the results. The literature

demonstrates the oldest form of this crone archetype is represented by the image of the

Kali-ma (Bolen, 2001; Mookerjee, 2008; Walker, 1985, 1996). The Kali-ma symbolizes

the destructive forces and how they can be transformed – a healthy tension of the

opposites of wrath and wisdom (Bolen, 2001; Mookerjee, 2008; Walker, 1985, 1996).

The women believe that transformation requires that we go into the deepest side of

ourselves, the shadow side, and from there brought back the light. The darkness is where

the light comes from. The shadow side of our psyche is the negative side of ourselves

that we do not like, but once it is acknowledged it can lead us to enlightenment and

wholeness (Gebara, 2003; Hopcke, 1989; Jung, 1968). Society often describes this

negative side as being outside of us, however once we acknowledge the shadow side we

are led to the depths within ourselves, where we can be transformed and experience

enlightenment (Gerbara, 2003; Hopcke, 1989).   The crone archetype as a metaphor for

transformation is not just for older women, but an invitation for everyone to go inwards

to receive enlightenment. The women believe that the call inward is also to bring forth

creativity and creative ideas.

The crone as a metaphor for transitioning through the cycle of life. The cycle

of life, birth/death/re-birth, is representative of transformation, but also symbolic of older

women transitioning through the process of their life cycle. The women interviewed

identified with their crone image(s) as symbolic of the cycle from maiden to mother to

crone that is embodied by the Triple Goddess. This cycle has helped them let go of one

identity to birth another. The Triple Goddess metaphor is symbolic of their embodiment

or growing into different aspects of themselves – one part does not go away, they just

melt together. However, metaphorically they still carry with them aspects of each – the

maiden, the mother, and the crone. Becoming a crone requires one to complete the work

of the maiden and the mother. The maidens work is to find her gifts and learn how to use

them. The mother is other-centered and nurtures these gifts, whether as biological

mother or through a creative process. The crone energy is realizing her connection to life

based upon a bigger picture and her work is to tap into her insights to speak her truth.

The ancients viewed the maiden-mother-crone, the Triple Goddess, as representing

the transformation of life and the transition of the cycle - birth/death/renewal of life

(Bolen, 2001; Gomberg, 2001; Ray, 2004; Walker, 1985). The three-fold image is also

manifested through natures cycles, for example: the stages of development (youth,

maturity, later life); the phases of the moon (waxing, full, waning); and the process found

in nature as growth, dormant, and re-growth (Bolen, 2001; Gomberg, 2001; Ray, 2004;

Walker, 1985). In ancient mythology, anthropological findings connect the mystery of

life that is represented in the form of gynocentric symbolism, the feminine divine,

through the three-fold metaphor – birth/death/renewal of life (Gimbutas, 1989).

The women interviewed believe the crone is the end of the cycle and the seed for

the next. They believe that it is important for them to share their wisdom with the

younger generation. The passing down of wisdom from generation to generation is part

of transitioning younger women to trust and learn how to use their own gift of intuition

(Estés, 1996). Several of the women interviewed expressed concern for society's void of

multi-generations living together and the consequence that the sharing and passing down

wisdom does not generally happen in our culture today.

Unanticipated Discoveries

This section touches on a few unanticipated discoveries from the results. The first

discovery was that the women interviewed did not generally identify with the

terminology "activate" in referring to the experience of resonating with their crone

images. The second surprise was having the women thank the researcher for

interviewing them and for bringing of awareness of the research topic.

       Discoveries. One of the central purposes of this research was to understand the

lived experience of women who "activated" the crone archetype.   This terminology was

defined as resonating and tapping into one's psychic energy to connect with the crone

archetypal form (Bolen, 2001). This is a dynamic relationship where the structure is

provided by the archetypal form and instinctively knows the form it will take upon

activation (Jung, 1968). The crone archetype is a way of channeling the crone's feminine

instincts (Ulanov, 1971) or tapping into wisdom that looks backwards (ancient history)

and looks forward (dreams, imaginations, real experiences), and does not remain static

(Kolbenschlag, 1996). In asking the women what it meant for them to activate their

crone image(s), most of the women did not generally identify with this terminology.

Some of the women thought that "activating" represents turning on and off a switch.

This was a surprise to find the women did not resonate with the term, however, when

they continued to describe their relationship with their crone it appeared to be dynamic

and similar to the "activating" process that was previously defined. The women

expressed that the crone evolves slowly over time; a process of becoming and

transforming into the crone that cannot be stopped. The women see it as a choice that

they can either become empowered by the crone image or deny it and allow society to

define who they are. Their bodies tell them when they reach menopause that they are

becoming something else when a sort of mourning happens. Accepting this seems to

"activate" something different inside of them. "Activating" is taking the crone on – her

energy and her insights. Further research is necessary to analyze the experience of

women "activating" their crone archetypal image and what this means to them.

        Another unanticipated result was the surprise at having several of the women

interviewed genuinely thank the researcher for interviewing them. The women expressed

the importance of bringing about awareness that older women need to be honored by

society. These women had experienced a relationship with their crone images that

allowed them to affirm their true self and to trust their own insights. They also wanted to

share this wisdom with other women. There was a feeling of urgency in doing so. The

urgency pointed out that women at their core are created whole, they are divine, and

women need to value themselves just the way they are.

Implications of the Research

    This section covers the implications for this research. These include implications

for holistic health, for the earth community, and for further research.

        Implications for holistic health. It is evident from the seven women interviewed

that in resonating and activating their crone archetypal images they have affirmed and

honored themselves as older women. To them, the crone represents a metaphor of a

relationship that has guided them through moments of transformation and in transitioning

through the life cycle as they have aged. Holistic health is defined as the well-being and

balance of the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of the self that are integrated within

the larger self (Dacher, 2005). The human search for authenticity and self-knowledge,

the true self, expands one's consciousness from the limited current Worldview that is

dependent upon fixated laws and predetermine outcomes (Dacher, 2005). This expanded

reality accepts both objective, rational ways of thinking (logos) and subjective, intuitive

ways of knowing (gnosis), the latter of which is not considered valid in the current

limited worldview. The personal transformation of our own lives, collectively with

others, creates a relationship of balance that promotes our holistic health as well as that of

the earth's community (Dacher, 2005).

     These women through resonating with the crone archetype have come to honor

their true selves and have learned to trust their inner wisdom, which has led them to a

holistic approach to their well-being. They have reclaimed ancient myths that honor

older women and in doing so have returned to their holistic primordial image and to find

healing (Bolen, 2001: Estés, 1996; Kolbenschalag, 2006; Ress, 2006). The crone

archetype is an invitation to reclaim images that honor older women and receive the

power within them (Kolbenschalag, 2006). The pre-existent form of the crone archetype

is part of the collective unconscious, but when it is activated individually it becomes a

relationship or connection that we resonate with by means of mythology or a story

(Campbell, 2008; Jung, 1968). The crone archetype is an internal guide to give

affirmations of deep knowing and give meaning to one's life experiences as well as give

guidance (Myss, 2003). In activating the crone, older women tap into their own wisdom

that underlies their true nature and purpose in life and in doing so grow in a healthy

manner into themselves, where ultimately society benefits from their contributions

(Gerbara, 2002; Freire, 2003; Ulanov, 1971; Ulanov & Ulanov, 1994).

     The way society views aging and older women is socially constructed and is

projected upon older people who perceive their worth based upon this, which has a

greater impact on them than the biological physical changes of the aging body

(Cruikshank, 2003). Society's negative perceptions about the elderly population,

especially for older women, are internalized by them and negatively affect their health

(Cruikshank, 2003; Holstein, 2001; Holstein & Minkler, 2003; Thomason, 2006). As

demonstrated through psychoneuroimmunology, stress, negative perceptions, and

emotions all affect the central nervous system and immune system that can lead to

imbalance in our bodies or to illness (Pert, 1997). Research in epigenetics documents

these affects that have been shown to over-ride our DNA coding (Lipton, 2005).

Gerontologists argue that society's derogatory perceptions of older women

influence their self-esteem negatively; thus ultimately compromises the state of well-

being for aging women (Cruikshank, 2003; Thomason, 2006).   Women interviewed for

this research, as well as documentation in the literature review, suggests that society's

negative perceptions results in demonizing older women and that this is directly linked to

the suppression of the sacred feminine and the feminine way of knowing. Upon women

reclaiming their feminine way of knowing (intuition) they are restored to honor their

primordial nature and find they trust and affirm their authentic self. This suggests that a

critical issue has been identified and acknowledged. Thus it is essential for society to

first identify and acknowledge that the issue behind demonizing older women is linked to

the suppression of the feminine way of knowing and the sacred feminine.

Imagine a society with reconstructed perceptions that honor older women, where

authenticity is promoted and different ways of knowing are valid. To deny older women

this has negative consequences for all, which limits the social integration of older women

into society (Kolbenschlag, 1996; Thomason, 2006). Society's negative perceptions of

older women are internalized by them; they are encouraged to suppress their inner ways

of knowing and to not honor their true self-identity; these become psychological issues

for them and ultimately a socio-political problem (Gebara, 2002; Freire, 2003; Kolbenschlag, 1996; Ulanov & Ulanov, 1994). It is necessary to reconstruct perceptions that honor older women. These perceptions should reflect the reality of women's collective experiences in a dynamic process from their perspective and in their voice (Kolbenschlag, 1996; Ress, 2003). The women interviewed for this research are part of this reconstruction process. This is the premise of holistic health that influences multiple disciplines. All disciplines that study the aging or aging issues would benefit from this research, such as: gerontology, psychology, health and medicine, nursing, and spirituality.

Implications for the earth community. The metaphor of the crone, the aspect of going inward, is symbolic of our connection and balance to the earth community and the universe beyond (Berry, 1988; Macy & Brown, 1998; Swimme & Berry, 1992). *The older woman represents the depths of her wisdom in the roots of a tree* (woman interviewee). The Gaia theory suggests the earth, the atmosphere, and all creation are a single living organism that self-regulates and evolves – a relationship where the parts are dependent upon the whole and not by themselves (Berry, 1988; Macy & Brown, 1998; Ress, 2003; Swimme & Berry, 1992). From a reductionist scientific view, quantum physics discovered that at the level of the smallest particle, properties are not fixated but rather patterns of probabilities of interconnections (Ress, 2003). Without their interconnection, there is no relationship or physical matter produced. Therefore, life is a relationship or a connection that needs to be balanced, where actions influence the other (Berry, 1988; Swimme & Berry, 1992).

The women interviewed believe that, as crones, they see this connection and speak out. The destruction and the misuse of the earth's resources is *recklessness*. We are poisoning our own home.   The crone is energy and this energy overlaps and is shared with those that are in relationship with the crone. The relationship is non-hierarchal and is equal, where each are dependent upon the other and each owe the other something in return. When we are connected or have a relationship, we value that relationship and take care of that relationship – it is a reciprocal obligation. The women interviewed feel that the sacred feminine needs to come out to restore balance and relationship to the earth. She is the end of the cycle and the seed for the next.

Ancient images connected humans to the universe and represented the life cycle through natural forms such as gynocentric images and the divine feminine (Campbell, 2008; Gimbutas, 1989). Ultimately a mystery, the ancients and indigenous populations could sense this connection in the form of energy and spiritual manifestations (Gimbutas, 1989).   These connections and relationships may be explained by morphic theory, where energy fields are believed to contain cumulative memories of behavior that influence species as well as become influenced over time from collective behaviors (Sheldrake, 1981). This is a reciprocal relationship where over time the morphic resonance becomes stronger.   As postulated from this theory, the crone archetype that exists in the collective unconscious, when activated, may resonate more deeply over time and may be influenced by the collective behavioral experiences of older women identifying with the crone archetype. Women's experiences of connecting with the crone archetypal images that affirm and honor them over time may thus influence society to change its negative perceptions of older women. Collective experiences of older women who find honor in

their true self may in return create a society that values the sacred feminine and accepts the inner way of knowing. Upon society's realization of our true connection to the universe and in valuing this relationship, the earth's balance will be restored that honors all creation.

   Implications for further research. Further research is necessary to understand the dynamic relationship of "activating" the crone archetype for women. In particular, further study of the implications of the collective experiences of women in terms of their resonance with crone archetypal images and how this may influence society's perceptions of older women. The actual reconstruction process of myths that reflect negative images of older women to myths that honor older women and the feminine intuitive way of knowing will come from the collective experiences of women as a whole over time. The implications of these reconstructed stories may ripple within society and create fundamental changes in the worldview paradigm.

Conclusion

   Older women who activate or resonate with a crone archetypal image can become empowered to value their true self. In connecting with the crone archetypal image, women learn to trust their own insights or intuitive feminine way of knowing. The crone can assist older women to transition holistically in their later years and can provide enlightenment for all women who are transformed by going inward. The crone archetype is an invitation to go inward to bring forth creativity. The crone is a metaphor of our relationship with the earth community and calls upon us to bring balance within our connection to the universe.   This relationship is reciprocal, a give and take in that we are obligated to take care of our relationship with the earth.

It was my honor to interview seven older women who described their powerful experiences of resonating or activating their crone image(s). I am affirmed in knowing that I have maintained the women's voices about their experiences. The experiences and the voices of these seven wise-women interviewed are simmering, bubbling, and assimilating in my psyche; they inspire me to grow into my authentic self, honoring and trusting my feminine intuitive way of knowing. My appeal to the reader of this research is simply one which brings about awareness and conscious change that reflects the importance of honoring the sacred feminine and the feminine inner way of knowing.

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Appendix A

REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The Crone Archetype: Women Heal by Activating Crone Images

Introduction and purpose of research:
You are invited to participate in a research study investigating how women identify or connect with a crone or wise-woman archetypal image. Joanne Sienko Ott, who is a student in the Masters of Arts in Holistic Health Studies at St. Catherine University, is conducting this study. You may be a possible participant in this research project and provide insights regarding how women in their third stage of life "activate" the crone/wise-woman image (e.g. Sophia, Hecate, Kuan Yin, Hildegard de Bingen, Kali-ma, Cerridwen, etc). The purpose of this research is to describe in various manners the actual experiences of women who "activate" (process in which you connect or identify with) a crone/wise-woman image from their own voices and perspectives, and to then bring about shared understanding and awareness to all parties involved within the research project (the researcher, the participants and society as a whole).

Researcher background and reason for research project:
The researcher, Joanne, entered the Master's program at St. Catherine University in 2009 as a result of her experience as a Maryknoll Lay missioner in Brazil, and especially from her time spent at a women's holistic health center that educated women about the healing power within themselves. Raised as a Catholic, Joanne has grown to identify with various images of the sacred feminine. Joanne has also learned that the personified images through mythology, folklore, and cultural stories can help us to put meaning to our own life experiences. Therefore, in this research project she became interested in discovering from the direct voices of women's experiences how they identify and "activate" with a crone/wise-woman image.

Procedures for participants:
Approximately 5-7 women are anticipated to participate in this research through individual interviews that will be confidential.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to talk with Joanne in a one-on-one conversation at a location that is most comfortable and convenient for you. The session is expected to take up 1-½ hours and the conversation will revolve solely about the research topic and purpose stated above. You will be asked to bring with you an image of the crone you most identify with to the interview, and is optional. At any time, you can withdraw from being a participant in this research project or request that parts or all of your conversation should be omitted from research documents according to your desire. The topic that you will talk about with Joanne, related to how you identify/connect with a crone/wise-woman image, may touch on sensitive areas. At anytime you can refuse to talk about a subject and you can request to end the session if desired.

Interested in participating? Please Contact Joanne!
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the researcher Joanne directly. **If you are interested in participating, please respond to this flyer directly to Joanne at her telephone number or via email at 952-303-4383 or via email jsott@stkate.edu.**

Appendix B
The Crone Archetype: Women Heal by Activating Crone Images
RESEARCH INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Introduction and purpose of research:
You are invited to participate in a research study investigating how women identify or connect with a crone or wise-woman archetypal image. Joanne Sienko Ott, who is a student in the Masters of Arts in Holistic Health Studies at St. Catherine University, is conducting this study. You were selected as a possible participant in this research project because you may be able to provide insights regarding how women in their third stage of life "activate" the crone/wise-woman image (e.g. Sophia, Hecate, Kuan Yin, Hildegard de Bingen, Kali-ma, Cerridwen, etc). The purpose of this research is to describe in various manners the actual experiences of women who "activate" (process in which you connect or identify with) a crone/wise-woman image from their own voices and perspectives, and to then bring about shared understanding and awareness to all parties involved within the research project (the researcher, the participants and society as a whole). Please read this form and ask questions before you decide whether to participate in the study.

Researcher background and reason for research project:
The researcher, Joanne, entered the Masters program at St. Catherine University in 2009 as a result of her experience as a Maryknoll Lay missioner in Brazil, and especially from her time spent at a women's holistic health center that educated women about the healing power within themselves. Raised as a Catholic, Joanne has grown to identify with various images of the sacred feminine. Joanne has also learned that the personified images through mythology, folklore, and cultural stories can help us to put meaning to our own life experiences. Therefore, in this research project she became interested in discovering from the direct voices of women's experiences how they identify and "activate" with a crone/wise-woman image.

Procedures for participants:
Approximately 5-7 women are anticipated to participate in this research through individual interviews that will be confidential.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to talk with Joanne in a one-on-one conversation at a location that is most comfortable and convenient for you. The session is expected to take up 1-½ hours and she would ask that you block that amount of time out in your schedule.   The conversation will revolve solely about the research topic and purpose stated above. You will be asked to bring an image of your crone you most identify to the interview, but is not required if you choose not to bring it.

Joanne asks your consent for tape-recording the conversations so that she can transcribe (written form of tape-recordings) your voice to later refer to for understanding in the research process. The tapes will be destroyed upon completion of the research project and only the transcribed texts will remain with the research documents, however, confidentiality as to the source of the texts will be maintained. All documents, tapes, or anything linking you to the research will be kept confidential and securely stored throughout the research process. Upon completion of transcribed texts from your tape-recorded conversation, Joanne would like to consult with you in a second short meeting (no longer than 30 minutes) to clarify with you your intent and to maintain your voice in understanding the texts.

At any time, you can withdraw from being a participant in this research project or request that parts or all of your conversation should be omitted from research documents according to your desire. The topic that you will talk about with Joanne, related to how you identify/connect with a crone/wise-woman image, may touch on sensitive areas. At any time you can refuse to talk about a subject and you can request to end the session if desired.

The research study will refer to your voice by using a given first name (can be a pseudonym) that you choose – you must designate a name. You do not have to use your name and can give another name to represent you, which will be presented in the research project texts. Below is a designated line for you to write in the name that you want to be referred by. After the one-on-one conversations with you, Joanne the

researcher will ask you what demographic information you want to disclose that you feel best describes you in light of the research. That is, in terms of your age, race/ethnicity, class, professional background, marital/single status, or any other demographic information that you consider important. For example, the research would reflect the given name of "Sophia" who is described as 65 years old, Caucasian, grew up in Wisconsin, and whose profession was marketing. You decide what demographic information you want to be disclosed in the research project.

Confidentiality:
Any information obtained in connection with this research study that could identify you will be kept confidential. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable by their legal name. Only the given name you notate below, that is other than your legal name if you designate a pseudonym, will be disclosed in documents for this research project or in the event of future publication.

Joanne will keep the research documents, consent forms, tape recordings, transcribed texts and digital files in a locked file cabinet at her home. Only Joanne and her advisor will have access to the records while she works on this research project. Upon completion of the research process, no later than August 31, 2011, Joanne will destroy all original reports and identifying information that can be linked back to you – such as the tape-recordings or documents that identify with your legal name. Transcribed texts and research texts, notated with your given name (pseudonym for the research study), not your legal name, will be retained with the research documents.

New Information:
If during the course of this research study Joanne learns about new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, she will inform you of these findings and request your consent.

Contacts and questions:
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the researcher Joanne directly at 952-303-4383 or via email jsott@stkate.edu. You may ask questions now, or if you have any additional questions later, the faculty advisor, Carol Giesler, Ph.D. at 651-690-7789, who will be happy to answer them. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you may also contact John Schmitt, Ph.D., Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:
You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read this information and your questions have been answered. Even after signing this form, please know that you may withdraw from the study at any time and no further data will be collected or will be omitted according to your desires.

_____

I _____consent to participate in the study and to be tape-recorded.
   Print name of participant

_____

Signature of Participant   **Date**

_____

Pseudonym given name for research documents

_____

Signature of Researcher   **Date**

Appendix C

The Crone Archetype:
Women Honor Their Authentic Self by Resonating with Crone images
RESEARCH QUESTION GUIDE

❖ TELL ME ABOUT THE STORY OF YOUR CRONE IMAGE. WHAT PARTS OF HER STORY DO YOU LIKE MOST.

❖ TELL ME ABOUT A CRONE/WISE-WOMAN IMAGE YOU IDENTIFY WITH. DESCRIBE WHAT THIS IMAGE MEANS TO YOU.

❖ WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ACTIVATE THIS IMAGE FOR YOU? HOW DO YOU FIND THAT YOU CONNECT OR IDENTIFY WITH THE IMAGE/VISUAL OF THE CRONE/WISE-WOMAN?

❖ WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED IN CRONING (IDENTIFYING OR CONNECTING TO THE CRONE/WISE-WOMAN IMAGE)?

❖ ARE THERE ANY MODELS OF BEING A CRONE THAT ARE IMPORTANT FOR YOU (MOVIES, BOOK SAINTS, STORIES, PEOPLE LIVING OR DEAD)?

Appendix D

The Crone Archetype:
Women Honor Their Authentic Self by Resonating with Crone images
DEMOGRAPHIC DISCLOSURE

In accordance to the research project, whereby Joanne Sienko Ott talked with you regarding your experience in "activating" or otherwise connecting or identifying with a crone/wise-woman image, she requests you disclose any demographic information that you feel best describes you in light of the research and of which you are comfortable in disclosing. That is, in terms of your age, race/ethnicity, class, professional background, marital/single status, or any other demographic information that you consider important to be linked with your pseudonym name you have given in the research project.

For example, the research would reflect the given name of "Sophia" who is described as 65 years old, Caucasian, grew up in Wisconsin, and whose profession was marketing. You decide what demographic information you want to be disclosed in the research project. Please write down in the space below any demographic information you would like to link to the "voice" of your personal experience.

_____

Pseudonym given name for research documents   Date

_____

Signature of Researcher   Date

Appendix E

Table 1
Model Crone Examples from the Women Interviewed

E.g. in Movies, Books, Saints, Stories, People living or dead	
Mother Teresa	CSJ nuns
The Dalai Lama	The McDonald Sisters (CSJ)
Mist of Avalon writings	Jessica Tandy – Fried Green Tomatoes
Joan Chittister writings	On Golden Pond film – older woman (mother/wife)
Mirian Therese Winters writings	Helen Mirren
Diarmuid O'Murchu writings	Steel Magnolias film – 5 older women
Thomas Merton writings	Nanny McPhee character in film