Draft

ARTEMIS: THE GODDESS WHO COMES FROM AFAR

> None of us ever sees Her in the dark
> or understands Her cruel mysteries.[1]

So speaks Iphigenia after years of devotion to Artemis, and even Hippolytus, who prides himself as alone among mortals having the privilege of ~~being with her and~~ conversing with her, confesses, "True I may only hear; I may not see God face to face."[2] For one like myself who has fought to evade such devotion it cannot help but be even more true. Yet Artemis claims me now, call me to her cruel mysteries with a power I can no longer withstand. The other goddesses who have presented themselves to me seemed to come forward out of the past, out of my childhood and youth and the early years of my marriage, or like Gaea as a reminder of some even more remote, prepersonal transhuman past. They helped me to re-member who I have been and am; Whereas Artemis seems to beckon me from the future, to call me toward who I am now to become.

Until now Artemis has always been "The Other." I have honored her as manifest in the life of the womanfriend who has been my most important soul-mate for almost thirty years, ever since we each gave birth to our first child. I have shared with this friend as intimately as with anyone

I know and yet I sense in her a self-enclosedness, a pure inviolability, which I have never broached. There is a space around her which compels respect; we are dear friends but it would be somehow profanatory to say we are close. When I see this woman standing tall ~~among her friends~~ I am reminded of Leto's pride in her daughter:

> The heart of Leto is gladdened,
> for the head and the brows of Artemis are above all others,
> and she is easily marked among them, though all are lovely.[3]

My friend embodies for me Artemis' fearless self-sufficiency; she is beautifully serious, committed, utterly uncompromising. I sense in her a forceful passion which is neither repressed nor sublimated, which does not leak away. There is nothing protective or seductive in her care for me, only the deep trust of one woman in another. She has never said, "Choose me," but always, "Choose Yourself." I have from the beginning of our friendship recognized her difference from myself, her at-homeness with a goddess I do not know at all and of whom I am more than a little afraid.

Thus when Artemis beckons, now she appears as a stranger, as one hitherto unknown. Yet, of course, that is a lie. She has always been there--as the strange one, as remote, mysterious, unapproachable, and nevertheless there; *unheimlich*, uncanny, and *therefore*, as Freud taught us to recognize, *heimlich*, very well known, deeply familiar.[4] It is nevertheless tempting to lie about that familiarity, to deny it or to transpose it into a more comfortable key. In Attica Artemis is called "The Wolf-One"[5] and the wolf-goddess seems to prompt lies, such as those Diane di Prima lists in her "Some Lies About the Loba":

that she is the goal
that she knows her name...
that she is black, that she is white
that you always know who she is
when she appears...
that you can hear her approach...
that you can remember the first time you met
that she is always with you
that she can be seen without grace

that there is anything to say of her
which is not truth[6]

But these are not lies I could ever fully accept.

When I read in Nilsson, "Artemis was the most popular goddess of Greece,"[7] I disbelieve. Those worshippers must have been lying, I feel, or engaged in some ritual apotropaic, or responding to a much-diminished version of this awe-inspiring figure--or else long since overcome fears which still assail me. In another poem, "DREAM: The Loba Reveals Herself," DiPrima represents the transition whereby Artemis becomes heimlich:

she came
to hunt me down...
she came to hunt, but I did not
stay to be hunted....
she came, she followed, she did not
pursue.
But walked, patient behind me....
only a step or two
behind me.
I turned to confront
to face
Her:
ring of fur, setting off
the purity of her head.
she-who-was-to-have-devoured me
stood, strong patient
recognizably
goddess.
Protectress

> great mystic beast of European forest.
> green warrior woman, towering.
> kind watchdog I could
> leave the children with.
> Mother of sister.
> Myself.[8]

I, too, must now ~~That~~ turn~~ing~~ to face the one in whose name, (so Otto tells us) "the Greeks undoubtedly detected the meaning, 'She Who Slays'," ~~is what confronts me now~~. It is, I know, a turning to face myself. Not, as before, a turning to face the imaginal meaning, the soul meaning, of mother or children, father or husband, lover or work. Not as before a turning away from a goddess who has power in my friend's life but none in my own. This task is simpler and more difficult; it involves only the goddess and myself. I feel before Artemis what Rilke felt before her brother, Apollo:

> Here there is nothing that does not see you.
> you must change your life.[10]

I understand the turning toward Artemis as another ritual observance, this time of a birth-day, my fortyninth. Endings and beginnings have always been important to me, perhaps naturally so for someone born at just that moment in the astrological calendar (on the cusp between Pisces and Aries) when one year ends that another may begin. Every birthday invites celebration, but this one has for several years now loomed as singularly significant. For seven times seven suggested a completion and a turning around, a birth into the rest of my life. I had looked to it as to an easy birth, like the ("only symbolic") rebirth of a snake shedding its skin or the emergence of a butterfly from its chrysalis. I had imagined it as simply a sloughing off of what was worn out and used up, so that what was viable and vital might emerge less fettered. Perhaps I had forgotten it

would have to be a human birth, a birth into the human. Or perhaps I had expected the birth to be assisted by gentle Eileithyia rather than by Artemis. For, though Artemis is a skillful and compassionate midwife, in her realm childbirth is painful and difficult and always accompanied by the threat of death. The first labor she attended (her mother's delivery of Artemis' own twin brother, Apollo) took nine desperately agonizing days (though her own birth had been without travail.) I (whose literal birth-ings were all so easy) am now discovering what it is to be engaged in a giving birth that one resists, twists away from in pain, despairs of being done with. (Another image that describes this inbetween place perfectly, comes from May Sarton: "I feel like a river when the tide changes and for a while the waters flow in crosscurrent, with no direction, only a pulling from all sides."[11])

I had thought at first I would be able to give a name to what was being born. Just before my birthday an "annual check-up" suggested I might have cancer of the uterus. "So, it is my death I am to give birth to," I thought, "Perhaps the reason I have looked forward to this birthday for so long is that somewhere deep inside me something knew it was to be the last." But that very literal threat was proven illusory before it led me to ~~implor-ation of~~ call on Artemis whose arrows bring a swift and gentle death to women. Then a love-affair which I had felt from the beginning was in some way a last time around seemed to be coming to an end. "So that's what it is," I mused; "I am going to be abandoned into a kind of solitude which until now I have evaded but for which I have always known myself to be destined." I thought of a poem by Sarton evoked by a similar threat of abandonment which begins:

> If I can let you go as trees let go
> Their leaves, so casually, one by one

and goes on:

> Twice I have set my heart upon a sharing,
> Twice have imagined a real human home,
> Having forgotten how some fiercer caring
> Demands this naked solitude for loam.[12]

But again I did not consciously think of Artemis, "the mercurial queen of solitude," and as it turned out, my lover was not, after all, preparing to leave me. It was a time for changes not for endings. Again, I felt both relieved and cheated. What was going to happen? Soon thereafter ~~For a time~~ it seemed that a job I knew I would not stay with much longer anyway might come to an end earlier than I would have chosen; and it began to seem likely that my husband and I might remarry. Both possibilities represented genuinely significant transitions, but I knew by then neither was what this birthday was really "about." It was not so much that these changes were too partial or too concrete as that they were too passive. DiPrima has it right. The transition I anticipated would not happen until I turned around to confront "Her." For this huntress insists on being hunted; she will never overtake. It is just that which makes it so difficult. I have to give birth--or struggle to be born; neither giving birth nor coming to birth are things that happen to one.

I have begun to understand this ~~as~~ now that I have discovered that the most adequate name for the particular liminal space I ~~now~~ find myself within is simply: Artemis. The name does not dissolve the mystery, but rather honors it with an appellation that suggests its complexity and depth.

Yet I must admit that I am somewhat puzzled and even resentful that it should be such a young goddess who stands so powerfully before me now. "What does she know?" I want to ask. Some version of the "divine child" would have been more easily acceptable (for after all the child is symbol of all new beginnings) but the archetypal image whose appearance I really expected at this point in my life was that of the wise old woman. whereas to find myself under Artemis' tutelage now makes me feel somewhat ashamed to be learning at fifty what others learn young. But (disagreeing here with both Slater and Pomeroy who see the youth and virginity of the classic version of some of the goddesses only in negative terms, as reflective of the Greek males' fear of mature femininity) I have begun to see that because Artemis has been the youthful virgin forever, she is in her own paradoxical way herself a wise old woman. I realize how truly timely it is to be pulled to attending to her now, to doing therapy with her (in the full ancient sense of therapeia), with this ancient huntress who surely and fearlessly follows any scent and who trusts us to learn to do the same. My familiar evasive games lose their efficacy in her wilderness: she will not be seduced into a relationship nor diverted by my storytelling skill. This ever-evanescent goddess appears only to say: "Here you are alone, as you have said you were ready to be."

As Walter Otto saw, manifold as Artemis' manifestations may be, we discover their unity and thus apprehend her essence, when we know her as the goddess who comes from afar, whose realm is the ever-distant wilderness. To this remoteness he connects her virginity, her solitariness, and her strangely cruel solicitude.[14]

Others have found Artemis more accessible but I have learned by now that I need to start with what is darkest, with what I like least but

but which cannot be eluded: Hera's jealousy, Athene's misogyny, Artemis' otherness. Like James Hillman, I believe:

> that each archetype has its pathological themes and that each pathologized theme has an archetypal perspective. Archetypal psychopathology finds the pathological inherently necessary to the myth: Christ must have his crucifixion; Dionysus must be childish and attract titanic enemies; Persephone must be raped; Artemis must kill him who comes too close.[15]

I have come to trust that the meaning of the otherness will be transformed as I am willing to acknowledge it, but I know I am evading Artemis as such so long as I deny that she is, indeed, "She Who Slays."

This title suggests most immediately ~~Artemis the huntress,~~ shaft-showering Artemis, the lady of arrows. Yet ~~that~~ her role as huntress is but one aspect of her ~~role as~~ being the Lady of the Wild Things, an aspect emphasized in the postHomeric period because the Greeks of that time "had no relation to the free life of nature except in the sport of hunting."[16] ~~But~~ Artemis (as Aeschylus reminds us) must be seen not only as the hunter but as the protector of all that is wild and vulnerable:

> Artemis the undefiled
> is angered with pity
> at the flying hounds of her father
> eating the unborn young in the hare and the
> shivering mother.
> She is sick at the eagles' feasting.
> Sing sorrow, sorrow: but good win out in the end.
> Lovely you are and kind
> to the tender young of ravening lions.
> For sucklings of all the savage
> beasts that lurk in the lonely places you
> have sympathy.[17]

She represents the mystic, primitive identity of hunter and hunted,[18] intimately

associated with the wild beasts of the field, the animals of the chase: the hare, the lion, the wolf, the wild boar, the bear, the deer. The earliest artistic representations of the goddess are those that show her holding one or another of these animals in her hands, often wearing the fruit of some wild tree on her head or with the branches of a wild fig tree above her. There are indications that the worship of Artemis in Arcadia and Attica included an initiation ceremony for prepubescent girls in which the goddess, her worshippers and the bear whose skin the maidens wore were "considered to be as of one nature and called by the same name."[19] Artemis is herself the wilderness, the wild and untamed, and not simply its mistress.

Yet she is uncivilized nature in quite a different sense from Gaea. Gaea is there before there are gods or mortals; she represents the ceaseless, irrepressible fecundity of nature. As Auden puts it, "Earth, till the end, will be Herself:"

> why we should feel neglected on mountain drives
> unpopular in woods, is quite clear....
> what
> to Her, the real one, can our good landscapes
> be but lies?[20]

Whereas Artemis is wilderness within the Olympian and human world. In this world, as Nilsson puts it, what "interests man is not Nature in herself, but the Life of Nature in the measure in which it intervenes in human life and forms a necessary and obvious basis for it."[21] Although Artemis may originally have been an oriental goddess, her cult is well established as genuinely Hellenic in all the chief places of prehistoric Greek settlement. Though she may have come from the fringes of the Greek world, she is in the classical period particularly identified with Arcadia, the wild, mountain-

ous, forested center of the Peloponesse. This reinforces my discovery that though we may first know her as the other without, she is more truly the other within. She herself insists on that inclusion; that she is not at all willing to be ignored when sacrifices to the Olympians are due is evident in the fates of Oeneus and Agamemnon. Yet she is not at home on Olympus; her only friend there seems to be Heracles who waits patiently at the gate to welcome her returning from the chase. She is clearly out of her element on the battlefields of Troy; her skill with the bow in the wilderness avails her little in that scene of interhuman strife. Hera scolds her contemptuously

> 'How have you had the daring, you shameless hussy, to stand up
> and face me? It will be hard for you to match your strength with mine
> even if you wear a bow, since Zeus has made you a lion
> among women, and given you leave to kill any at your pleasure.
> Better for you to hunt down the ravening beasts in the mountains
> and deer of the wolds, than try to fight in strength with your betters.
> But if you would learn what fighting is, come on. You will find out
> how much stronger I am when you try to match strength against me.'

and then Hera

> ...caught both of her arms at the wrists in her left hand
> and with her right hand stripped away the bow from her shoulders,
> then with her own bow, smiling, boxed her ears as Artemis
> tried to twist away, and the flying arrows were scattered.
> She got under and free and fled in tears, as a pigeon
> in flight from a hawk wings her way into some rock-hollow
> and a cave, since it was not destiny for the hawk to catch her.

? In that realm she is a clumsy child who runs whimperingly to her father:

> The maiden took her place kneeling at the knees of her
> father and the ambrosial veil trembled about her. Her
> father Kronides caught her against him, and laughed softly,

> and questioned her:
> 'Who now of the Uranian gods, dear child, has done such things to you, rashly, as if you were caught doing something wicked?'
> Artemis sweet-garlanded lady of clamours answered him:
> 'It was your wife, Hera of the white arms, who hit me, father, since hatred and fighting have fastened upon the immortals.' [22]

Born on unpeopled Delos, she is really only at home in the wilderness, far from the haunts of men. A different logic, a different strength and wisdom, rules there. To move the locus of experience from the interpersonal world of the polis to Arcadia results in everything's looking different. The romantic view of Arcadia as an idyllic pastoral realm inhabited by nymphs and shepherds does not do full justice to the Arcadia of ancient mythology which is a wild and dangerous, rude and barbarous land. Yet it is an imaginal realm, a realm set apart from the everyday world, one where things are as they are in themselves not as they are when shaped and manipulated by humankind. Of the many forms of imagination Artemis represents the one that is most foreign to me: the one connected to the psychological ~~freedom~~ realm Jungians call sensation (as opposed to thinking, feeling or intuition). There is nothing spiritual or sentimental or even really sensual in Artemis' response to the wild things in whose company she lives. She does not respond to them as vehicles of symbolic meaning nor on the basis of their capacity to bring pleasure or displeasure. Yet she would know each tree by its bark or leaf or fruit, each beast by its footprint or spoor, each bird by its plumage or call or nest. It is only such carefully attendent seeing that allows one to know why the black poplar that bears no fruit should be emblem of the underworld goddesses, the rose Aphrodite's flower or the

wild fig the fruit of Artemis, or why the migratory ~~and lascivious~~ quail should be Artemis' bird ~~where~~ while the night-preying owl is Athene's. The woods and fields belong to Artemis and her nymphs: each tree, laurel or myrrh, oak or ash, is truly recognized only when we know with which nymph(s) to associate it; each wild flower, each brook and stream, also evokes a particular sacred presence. Artemis' imagination is concrete and specific, bespeaks a loving respect for the unique is-ness of everything ~~that~~ as it lives in its natural state. Yet it would be a wrong to mis-take her mode of perception for literalism: her response is too animistic, too anima-istic, for that. Each creature, each plant, each wood, each river, is to her a Thou not an it. ~~But~~ Unlike Aphrodite she never confuses this I-Thou relation with merging. To know Artemis is to understand what Buber means by "distance and relation."

It is, of course, obvious that Artemis is an what Jungians call "anima figure--but one who helps us recognize that "anima" is not to be equated with contrasexuality or a gift for relationship or with the functions of feeling or intuition. Anima is, as Hillman puts it, what gives events (or persons or "things") the dimension of soul.[23] Soul-making is thus not to be reduced to the making of our own soul but to the re-creation (or rediscovery) of the world within which we live as a realm of souls, of living, meaning-full-in-themselves, beings.

Artemis also reminds us of the necessary and profound connection between soul and solitude. In the interhuman world of the polis we necessarily respond mostly on the basis of ego and persona; in the wilderness those are as dysfunctional as is Artemis' wildness on the Trojan battlefield. In her Journal of A Solitude Sarton celebrates the reality and depth made possible

by the stripping down that is ~~the~~ a correlate of true aloneness:

> I am here alone for the first time in weeks,
> to take up my "real" life again at last.
> That is what is strange--that friends, even
> passionate love, are not my real life unless
> there is time alone in which to explore and
> to discover what is happening or has happened.
> Without the interruptions, nourishing and maddening,
> this life would become arid. Yet I taste it fully
> only when I am alone here.[24]

For Sarton, solitude attracts as a needed and healing complement to her life within the human world. From the perspective of the Olympian pantheon Artemis represents such complementation, but from her own perspective Artemis represents a much more radical and wholehearted choice of the lonely wilderness--and a more terrifying one. There is a risk in Artemis' world of losing one's capacity for human communication, of being caught helplessly within one's anima-lity. Ovid describes Actaeon's horror at discovering the horned stag's head which the pool reflects back to him:

> (he) tried to say "Alas"--but no words would come.
> He sobbed; that at least was a sound he uttered, and
> tears flowed down his new-changed face. Only his
> mind remained unchanged.[25]

and Callisto's pain at her transformation into an ugly, lumbering, grinning bear:

> Her power of speech was lost, with no prayers or
> entreaties could she win pity, and a hoarse and
> frightening growl was her only utterance. Yet her
> human mind remained even when she had become a bear; with
> never-ceasing moans she made known her suffering.[26]

I know that part of my own fear of Artemis is connected to a fear of such radical solitude and the kind of unprotected confrontation with self and ~~of the~~ isolation it represents--even though for as long as I have at-

tended to my dreams they have suggested that my true destiny is associated with a primary aloneness that I not only accept but in some measure choose.

¶ The earliest dream I remember, one that recurred repeatedly while I was a child, begins with my leaving my bed after everyone else in the household is asleep and making my way to a small and secret door at the back of my closet. It opened onto a steep and narrow, dark and uneven flight of stone stairs which led down to a landing far, far below the cellar of our house. There was another door, massive and beautifully panelled, with heavy iron hinges and a lock to which only I had the key. Within was a spaciously elegant chamber, plush velvet carpet and drapes, sparkling chandeliers and sconces, a room empty but for (and this varied) either a gilded, cushioned throne or an ornately worked bejeweled treasure chest. I knew as a child, even in my waking hours, that this room was always there, that no one else had access to it, and that it was my real home.

Years later as a young married woman I had a dream in which the world I really belong to, though again a place apart, was more clearly "outlandish" than the safe enclosure of that early vision of the interior. In this dream I found myself entering an elegant room whose mirrors and appointments suggested the ballroom at Versailles. I was led to a table which evidently had been reserved for me and there opposite me sat a young man, the one for whom I was destined. He did not ~~fulfill~~ look like the fairy prince of my dreams and yet I knew I had only to make some gesture of acceptance, such as to stretch my hand across the table toward his and he would immediately be transformed into my ideal. I knew it would take only this gesture and then I would forever after look upon

him as a true fulfillment. But in the dream I could not settle for that, so I got up from the table and walked to one of the French doors and stepped out--out into boundless space--floating alone and yet somehow feeling supported and in my own element.

A decade or more later still I had another dream in which I chose solitude despite the beauty and joy of creative relationships with others:

> In the center was a pond, in its center a spring which lifted itself only a few inches above the level of the water, not a spectacular fountaining of water, only a continually renewing source. We were all around this pond. I had always been there. They had just come. They were all not yet known to me and mostly it seemed not to each other either. We went around the circle, and one after another sang that song which expressed himself, his gift and the pattern that enclosed him, and his longing. Then as in a progressive circle dance, each of the men came before a woman and sang to her what could only come from him to her and she responded, and this we all heard for it belonged to what was happening in our midst. Then each couple made love in that couple's way and that was a private happening which concerned only those two. And then the men moved on around the circle to the next girl. I was included in this singing, this love-making, this dancing, and wanted and responded to and cared about each of the men who came to me in the way created by his particular being-there. And all of us came to know each other, to know what we might be hoping to hear in This one's song the next time he sang, to know how we hoped we might be able to love That one when he came to us and how we hoped he might turn to us and what he might bring to song in us which was waiting but which only he could draw forth.
>
> Then we had come around full circle and one by one they came to me, the men and the women, and kissed me on the face and left. I didn't know until all were gone and I sat there before the spring how important and wonderful it was that all had gone--had been strong enough to go and willing to go, though it had been difficult to hold some of them back--but all had gone, and as I sat there before the spring I knew that if when the time was over they had not gone, the spring would no longer spring and I would have been left there before a dead and dried-out pool.[27]

So there has always been alive in me a receptivity to Artemis' call. And yet, and yet.... I know I also fear the loneliness and isolation and fearsomeness of truly responding to it, and also know how some of the attraction is itself pathological, inspired by a fear of connection, of commitment, of losing myself in that way. I have also become increasingly aware how instinctively I seem to call on Aphrodite to help me against Artemis--or how spontaneously Aphrodite seems to appear to lure me away. Again, a dream, a more recent one, put this clearly:

> At the beginning (and even within the dream there was the the sense of being at a mythological beginning point) I was with my lover, together with him in a wondrously sensuous, profoundly beautiful, though not explicitly sexual way. There was a connection between us at the level of soul like an orgasm which leaves one feeling utter fulfillment. We knew that for the moment there was nothing more we could give one another, though (at least on my side) there was also a kind of smiling blissful welcoming of later moments when we would turn to one another again to give and to receive.
>
> But then somehow (though not in words) my lover communicated to me that it was time for me to go off and take care of myself, to do what I needed and wanted to do for myself. Only if I really did that, did it just for me and not for the sake of some later reconnection between us, might we be together again in this so important to both of us way at the end of the evening/at the end of our lives. (That ambiguity, too, was present within the dream: this was the task of the evening, the task of my life.)
>
> Though my lover sent me off it nevertheless felt that the going was right for me, not imposed by him nor undertaken simply for the sake of our relationship. And so I went; I did many things, some by myself, some with others, and each thing I did was symbolized by some beautiful concrete artifact (a small very old and worn prayer rug, some jewelry, a stone from a beach); these I collected in a small suitcase that I took with me everywhere. From time to time I would think, "and some time I will see my lover again," but that was for its time; it did not seem to inform how I was in this time.
>
> Then the evening/my life/our lives came to their foreordained end. Without having looked for him, without going to him, my lover was there. I was filled with joyous antici-

> pation of sharing with him all the beautiful things in my suitcase and the story that went with each. But he said, or somehow communicated, "No, I don't want to see. You did it for you, didn't you, not for me, not for the sake of being together again or in order to have something wonderful to share with me?"
>
> I was devastated--and not sure of my answer. I knew that, yes, I had done it all for myself. There was nothing I had done that wasn't just for me, that I had done to win his praise or gratitude, nothing I would have done differently had I known we would never be together again. I also knew there had never been an assurance that we would reconnect; no promises had been made; there had been no betrayal, yet at some level I had always taken it for granted that we would reconnect and that ~~you~~ he would love what I had brought to share with ~~you~~ him.

The dream ~~to me~~ suggests how for me the call to solitude and the recall to relationship are deeply intertwined; how much in me can bear to be with Artemis only on condition of an eventual return to Aphrodite's realm.

The fear that Artemis' solitude provokes ~~in me~~ is not only a fear of loneliness but of savagery, wildness, of a kind of passion entirely different from Aphrodite's sensual indulgence of feeling. In Artemis' realm feelings do not issue in creative expression or in sexual involvement--one does not do anything with them; one simply comes to know them, discriminatingly, unflinchingly. "So this is me." Not only domesticated feelings but the very taming of feeling is here beside the point. The feelings evoked in her realm are of many hues--vulnerability, solicitude, rage, instability; they include the painful sense of ineradicable otherness, and even the ache of not having access to one's deepest feelings; but each is pure, entire, for the time all-encompassing.

In Artemis passion and virginity are strangely intertwined, as are the wildness and remoteness of her woodland habitat. Artemis and her wilderness

both invite and resist violation. We each long like Callisto to enter "a woods that no one throughout the years has touched;" yet, once we have entered it, it is no longer a virgin forest. As Philip Slater describes so well in his Pursuit of Loneliness the wilderness becomes an ever-receding and even more fantasmal reality. Artemis becomes the hunted. In Tristes Tropiques Levi-Strauss communicates the sad quixotic character of this search of the other as he describes the experience of being "the first white man to visit a particular native community" in the hinterlands of Brazil:

> They were as close to me as reflections in a mirror. I could touch them, but I could not understand them. I had been given at one and the same time, my reward and my punishment. Was it not my mistake and the mistake of my profession to believe that men are not always men? That some are more deserving of interest and attentinn because they astonish us by the colour of their skin and their customs? I had only to succeed in guessing what they were like for them to be deprived of their strangeness: in which case I might just as well have stayed in my village. Or if, as was the case here, they retained their strangeness, I could make no use of it, since I was incapable of even grasping what it consisted of.[28]

Levi-Strauss believes that the otherness is either illusion or impossible barrier, that as long as we see the other as other we will seek to destroy it--or her. Susan Griffin makes much the same point in this passage from Woman and Nature titled "The Hunt":

> She has captured his heart. She has overcome him. He cannot tear his eyes away. He is burning with passion. He cannot live without her. He pursues her. She makes him pursue her. The faster she runs, the stronger his desire. He will overtake her. He will make her his own. He will have her. (The boy chases the doe and her yearling for nearly two hours. She keeps running despite her wounds. He pursues her through pastures, over fences, groves of trees, crossing the road, up hills, volleys of rifle shots sounding, until perhaps twenty bullets are embedded in her body.) She has no mercy.

> She has dressed to excite his desire. She has no scruples. She has painted herself for him. She makes supple movements to entice him. She is without a soul. Beneath her painted face is flesh, are bones. She reveals only part of herself to him. She is wild. She flees whenever he approaches. She is teasing him. (Finally, she is defeated and falls and he sees that half of her head has been blown off, that one leg is gone, her abdomen split from her tail to her haed, and her organs hang outside her body.)[29]

This suggests again the importance of allowing Artemis to be other, to remain the goddess who comes from afar, as she allows each creature in her world its own otherness. The meaning of Artemis' virginity is in large measure this insistence on inviolability, on separateness, on in-her-self-ness.

Again, I become aware of how often I seem to welcome rather than resist what Artemis would experience as violation, how little protective I often am of my own soul-space. Yet at some of the most important moments in my life I have fought as fiercely as Artemis herself for such privacy. At those times the pull to be alone has been felt as an instinctual, animal necessity. The point seemed to be that if I were to live these moments when I was brought in touch with the deepest rythms of biological (and so of feminine) being fully, that is imaginally, I would have to be allowed to live them alone. There was nothing conscious in these insistences on being left alone, but there was an unquestioned conviction that I must be. The instances that come most immediately to mind are three: keeping my first pregnancy an unshared secret (even from my husband) for the first three months: for this was <u>my</u> child; arranging to deliver my last child when my husband was far away: for this was to be <u>my</u> bringing-forth; and, at the time of deepest turmoil in my life, when I was close to suicide, saying with all my strength to him who wanted so much to help: "Get out of my way--I have to do this

myself." Though I did not recognize her, Artemis, in whose realms birth and death are feminine mysteries, was clearly present in each of these moments. Otto, as often, says it superbly: "The bitterness and danger of woman's most difficult hours come from Artemis, who....works her mysterious effects upon womankind from the wilderness."[30]

Artemis is, indeed, closely associated with feminine being, especially to those aspects of feminine experience that are connected to biological femaleness: menstruation, conception, parturition, nursing, menopause, death. (The last may not seem to us a peculiarly female mystery yet to the Greeks it was self-evident that, though Apollo's arrows bring death to males, it is Artemis who brings about the death of women.) She is thus a goddess of all women and related to all the phases of female existence, yet very differently so from Hera. Hera is a threefold goddess, simultaneously maiden, wife and post-conjugal solitary one. She represents female being as it is oriented toward (and away from) fulfilling relationship with male being. Artemis represents female being in its own essence, without respect for male being in fact or fantasy, longing or refusal. Thus she is and remains virgin. Her chastity, her physical virginity, though probably not part of the most archaic conception of Artemis, is already a central element in the Greek vision of Artemis long before Homer or Hesiod. (Originally Artemis was probably a mother goddess--as the manybreasted Artemis of Ephesus still is even in classical times--whose virginity simply meant that she belonged to no one, that she had never been confined in a monogamous marriage.) We should not move too quickly to understand her virginity as "only symbolic" but

rather try to understand as fully as we can what insistence on it as an essential aspect of her being might mean. For, it seems appropriate that a goddess as involved as is Arteims with the biological dimensions of feminine experience should express her own essential femininity by stressing that her feminine being has never been violated.

Callimachus in his somewhat sentimental "Hymn to Artemis" suggests that as a mere three year old Artemis already had ~~so~~ a precocious a sense of her own essence. ~~that~~ In response to her father's asking her what gifts would most delight her, she immediately pled: "Pray give me eternal virginity." Yet her virginity is very different from that of Athene who moves comfortably and unthreatened in the world of men, her girdle securely knotted like a warrior's. Athene's virginity (at least as it is understood by Homer and the tragedians) represents a transcendence of gender, a way of preventing sexual attraction from disrupting heterosexual companionship. Artemis, on the other hand, wears the untied girdle of the maiden. She is not willing not to invite by disowning her femininity, but also not willing to succumb to masculine approaches. Her power lies in this enticement--and in her inviolability, which often makes her seem cold and cruel, and disdainful of those who are more susceptible.

Artemis embodies a profound denial of the world of patriarchy, the world where some persons have power over others, the world of dominance and submission, where one can be hunter <u>or</u> hunted. Although in Homer and Callimachus she is represented as Zeus' childishly winsome daughter, most of the traditions present Artemis as intensely identified with her mother and relegate Zeus to the role of the anonymous procreator which the father was

given in the original matriarchial family. Leto, Apollo and Artemis appear, says Kerenyi, as the characteristic matriarchial triangle.[31] Leto's children protect her from rape by Tityus and Pythoni, and from Niobe's insulting boasts. (Indeed, Artemis' own near compulsive virginity can at one level be understood as response to her mother's so often threatened sexual vulnerability.)

In Artemis' realm, as in the matriarchial world generally, the connection with the brother is more important than the connection with father or husband. It is generally agreed that her twinship with Apollo is not aboriginal, that, for instance, Apollo plays no part in the primitive Arcadian cults devoted to Artemis and that Artemis has no early relation to Apollo's oracle at Delphi. Cook suggests Artemis might once have been worshipped as Apollo's mother[32] (and Farnell that as Cyrene she may have been his lover)[33] but by the time of Homer their twinship is well established. Cook sees mythological twinship as derivative of the notion of two-faced divinity, as dramatic incarnation of profoundly important polarities such as lightness and darkness, divinity and mortality, masculinity and femininity. It is difficult to know which of the points of affinity or contrast between the two divinities led to their association and which result from it. It may well be, for instance, that Artemis' association with the moon (which despite popular assumptions almost all scholars agree comes into being very late, since even Homer knows nothing of it) derives from Apollo's with the sun. Otto sees the relation between the two as one that becomes more important the more one sees how central to the essence of each is their purity, their sublimity, their remoteness. Other scholars lay less stress on Apollo's significance for a full

appreciation of Artemis. Yet it is worth noting that Artemis' sisterliness has a different meaning from Athene's or Hera's. In Hera's case the sibling relationship to Zeus is clearly subordinated to the spousal. Ideally her marriage represents an incestuous hieros gamos in which male and female are brought together in perfect fulfillment of each. Athene's brothers, Ares and Hephaestus, are but crippled, fractional incarnations of ~~so-called~~ "masculine" potentialities she herself realizes more fully and wholly. Her virginity is determined by the sublimation of father-daughter incest, whereas that of Artemis' ~~virginity~~ receives its definition from the matriarchial world where the form of incest subject to the most heavy taboo is that between brother and sister.[34] Thus at least part of the meaning of the twinship with Apollo is that it even more firmly establishes Artemis' virginity as a confirmation of her femininity rather than as a rejection of it.

As I indicated earlier, Artemis' virginity (like Hera's marital fidelity) seems to invite violation (as Athene's rarely does). (That her presence as evanescent can easity be perceived as seductiveness, I know myself, having in the past sometimes judged ~~such~~ Artemis-women ~~as~~ to be cockteasers because I saw them from Aphrodite's perspective where the unavailability is but a move within the game of love rather than an essential quality.) Orion's and Otus's sexual attempts are, with some assistance from Apollo, easily repulsed. (Orion may have been a valued hunting companion until he misunderstood the terms of their friendship; if so, he is an anomaly in Artemis' life which otherwise is singularly devoid of the kind of supportive relations with men that figure so prominently in the tradition about Athene.) ¶ The story of

Actaeon represents more vividly that virgin Artemis is, indeed, She Who Slays. (The story goes that After a day's hunting, Actaeon leaves his fellow huntsmen to find a quiet place to rest. Accidentally he comes upon a hidden pool where Artemis is bathing with her nymphs. Outraged at being seen naked, she flings water at his face and thus transforms him into a stag. His own hounds catch the animal's scent and relentlessly pursue their erstwhile master. Inevitably they catch him and tear his body into shreds.) To hide from this story is to hide from Artemis herself. There is something hard and cruel, ruthlessly singleminded evident here. Artemis has no second thoughts; she is all decisiveness. (~~Unlike~~ Athene ~~who~~ responds as automatically when Teiresias sees her bathing with Chrysippe by striking him blind, but later repents the extravagance of that gesture and in recompense grants him prophetic foresight, long life, and the preservation of his intelligence in Hades.) Artemis ~~has~~ exhibits no such ~~second thoughts~~ repentence. When Actaeon's glance turns her the huntress into the hunted, she naturally makes him experience the same transformation from hunter into victim. In her world, as in Sartre's, the voyeur is an only thinly disguised rapist. She is the other who comes from afar as Thou; she is not willing to submit to being made the other who is the transfixed object of my gaze.

I had at one time understood Artemis' dramatic rejection of any male other than her brother (and perhaps some brotherly companions like Heracles and Orion) as simply the obverse of her devotion to women. Because I have always thought of Artemis as the most woman-identified among the Greek goddesses, I had imagined the most promising access to her would be by way of an exploration of her relation to the nymphs in whose company we so con-

sistently find her. Indeed, Nilsson suggests she is essentially simply nymph epitomized, the nymph who rises to prominence from amidst the company of nymphs, (as Artemis "whose head o'er tops them all", she literally does so).[35]

Thus I had seen Artemis as prodding me to look honestly at the role in my life of deep and passionate friendships with women. Even this Artemis threatened me, portended a judgment from which I flinch. For I saw her as representative of the lesbian who has wholeheartedly chosen the love that women share with women and who often regards with disdain some one like myself who cannot say that my friendships with women are the only ones I really need, the only ones that truly nurture. That Artemis is indeed a woman who loves women even the patriarchially-determined classical versions of the myths disclose. (Perhaps the most compelling evidence is to be found in the story of Zeus's rape of the most beautiful of Artemis' nymphs, and the one most dear to her, Callisto. For to win ~~her~~ the nymph's love Zeus disguises himself as Artemis and in that guise Callisto welcomes his embraces.) Yet I now regard seeing the relationship between Artemis and her nymphs primarily in sexual terms as simplification and distortion. For it transposes their relationship into an Aphroditic key and thus ignores the testimony of the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite that alone among gods and mortals, Hestia, Athene and Artemis are immune to Aphrodite's power. Artemis does not say, "choose women," but "choose yourself." The meaning of ~~the~~ her primary association with women is that in loving women we are loving our womanly self. (Thus, though the Amazons are worshippers of Artemis, they may--at least in the most well-known accounts of them--represent a somewhat different attitude. For they are both anti-male and as ruthless and bellicose as any man; Artemis represents

a more profound femininity, one that is not essentially defined by a relation, positive or negative, to the masculine.)

Fully to understand Artemis' connection to women demands relating it to that virginity which is so essential to her nature. For even in her association with women Artemis seems to be pointing to a communion that is not identical with sexual union and may be subverted by it. The deep bonding of woman to woman which Artemis encourages may, indeed, encompass passionate attraction, sensual delight and sexual consummation. Yet she reminds us that the sexual may often be surrogate for a more profound affirmation of one another and of our shared womanliness than we quite know how to express, or an evasion of spiritual connection which seems more fearful than the physical one. We mis-take Artemis' chastity if we interpret it only as a patriarchial culture's attempt to suppress her lesbianism, her refusal of men and her love of women. Her chastity represents something more essential to her nature. It surely does not mean that she is not stirred by feminine beauty; it does not necessarily mean that she refuses sexual intimacy with women; but it does mean that she never wholly gives herself to another, female or male. Farnell's description of a sculptural representation of Artemis by a Praxitelean artist captures this axial self-enclosedness:

> The face is high, the features maidenly and noble. The hair is carefully drawn away from the forehead and temples, the eyes are long and rather narrow, the line of the eyebrows is straight and pure; the wall of the nose near the eyes is very large, as it is in the Hermes' head; the upper lip is slightly curved and the lower lip is very full; the chin is large and the cheeks are broad. The eyes are full of thought, with a distant inscrutable look in them, and the proud reserved expression accords with the self-centred life of the goddess.[36]

When Otto speaks of her as one who "compels delight but cannot love" he captures her remoteness but not, I believe, the beautifully dispassionate caring it expresses. Artemis' refusal to give herself bespeaks her respect, not her rejection, of the other; it is an expression not of frigidity but of passion. For what she gives herself to is precisely her own passion, her own wildness. Though the Orphic Hymn to Artemis may invoke her as the "frenzy-loving" goddess, Artemis is not driven mad by her passion as are the maenads when they leave their husbands' beds for their mountaintop orgies. Neither does she feel the need to find some appropriate sublimated expression for it as might Athene or to transpose it immediately into the interpersonal erotic realm as would Aphrodite. Artemis is, paradoxically, at home in the wilderness and so able to let her own wildness simply be.

Artemis is who she is with an ease and simplicity that indeed seems divine. She seems not to suffer self-doubt or inner division and so to have little patience with those of us who do.

(NOTE) Thus she often appears as a harsh judge of women. She attacks not only the Chiones or Niobes who boast that they are more beautiful than she or richer in progeny than her mother, but also women who betray their lovers. She does not punish the breaking of marital bonds per se; after all she supports Aegisthus and Clytemnestra against Agamemnon. Rather when she kills Coronis and Ariadne it is because they have betrayed an immortal lover (Apollo or Dionysos) with a mortal one (Ischys, Theseus), and thereby in some profound sense betrayed themselves.

She Who Slays confronts even the nymphs she loves most dearly, for her care for women never issues in uncritical affirmation. She expects

them to be as true to their self-sufficient virginal womanliness as she is to hers; when they fail there is no forgiveness. Most of the myths about her nymphs recount such failure; many suggest that the nymph in question is simply a byform of Artemis herself, as though such inviolability could not really be maintained eternally. The nymphs resist, but to no avail. Thus, as Ovid describes it, Callisto (whose name, "most beautiful", is often an attribute of Artemis herself):

> fought against (Jupiter) with all a woman's strength--Juno's anger would have been lessened could she have seen her--but what god is weaker than a girl, and what god can overcome Jupiter? He won, and to the heavens he flies and she hates the wood that knows her shame.[37]

But Artemis never gives Callisto a chance to explain how passionately she had tried to fight off Zeus' advances; when Artemis discovers her pregnancy, banishment is immediate and irrevocable. (Though it is Hera, not Artemis, who turns her into a bear whom years later her son nearly kills.)

Myths about such resistent but ravished nymphs abound. Britomartis, (a Cretan Artemis whose name means "sweet nymph,") fled from King Minos' advances for nine months until, caught on a steep mountain crag, she leaps in desperation into the sea below--some suggest in shame because she had been despoiled despite all her resistence. Arethusa, spied upon by Alpheius as Artemis was by Actaeon, turns into a spring in Ortygia (an island close to Delos often designated as Artemis' birthplace) to avoid his advances, but he becomes a river whose waters flow under the sea and then rise to the surface on the island to mingle with those of the stream. Artemis turns Taÿgete into a doe to help her escape Zeus' embraces but ~~to~~ he

ravishes her nonetheless.
~~no avail~~. Even Persephone's abduction by Hades can be seen as but another variant of this same scenario; indeed, according to Herodotus Aeschylus spoke of Artemis as the daughter of Demeter, and thus implicitly identifies her with Persephone.

Atalanta is a human version of the young female deeply committed to remaining a virgin whose longing is overborne, this time through Aphrodite's intervention. Exposed as an infant because her father had wanted only boys, she is raised by a she-bear and grows up to love hunting above all else and to be fleeter afoot than any other mortal. Yet even her speed cannot protect her from being caught by the apple-dropping Melanion. Another human Artemis, one pictured only while still ~~the~~ a yonng beautifully self-enclosed girl just on the edge ~~of opening into her~~ of womanhood, is Nausicaa as Odysseus first comes upon her:

> among them
> it was Nausikaa of the white arms who led in the dancing;
> and as Artemis, who showers arrows, moves on the mountains
> either along Taygetos or on high-towering
> Erymanthos, delighting in boars and deer in their running,
> and along with her the nymphs, daughters of Zeus of the aegis,
> range in the wilds and play . . .
> so this one shone among her handmaidens, a virgin unwedded.[38]

Because Artemis is the goddess of unspoiled virginity she is especially associated with nine- to twelve-year-old prepubescent girls, with maidens in "the years of fugitive bloom." The transition from childhood to womanhood is her particular province; she is the maiden; she is the transition. Artemis is often represented as a tender nurse of all that is young and

vulnerable, be it human or animal, as kourotrophus, and indeed she is; but she has no patience with those who remain childish, who stay dependent and needy, as adult women. Because Artemis represents a transition into womanhood that is not defined by an entrance into monogamic marriage, a sacrifice to her is part of the young girl's prenuptial ritual. Before her marriage the girl takes her dolls and the clothes she has worn as a child and in propitiation dedicates them to Artemis. The ritual reminds the girl of all that she is giving up by marrying. It may also serve to implore Artemis to be present nevertheless in the peculiarly feminine pains and dangers that still await her, particularly those associated with childbirth.

That the ritual was once more bloody is implicit in Clytemnestra's first painfully innocent question to Agamemnon when she still believes that she has come to Aulis to see Iphigenia wed to Achilles:

> Now I ask this, have you slain the victims
> to Artemis the goddess for our child?[39]

What happens, of course, is that Iphigenia herself becomes the sacrifice, and then, as Artemis' priestess in the bloody rites of the Taurians, she the slain one becomes the slayer.

Whatever aspect of Artemis I look at, again and again I discover She Who Slays, she who comes from afar, she is who is other. Paradoxically she has made me more aware than I have ever been before of the power of Aphrodite in my life, of how spontaneously when confronting Artemis' claims on me, I respond by pleading "Let's play Aphrodite instead." I devote my energies to love-affairs rather than to soul, discriminate always on the

basis of what I find pleasing or displeasing, seek to transform all feelings into sexual passion, all potentially transformative experience into well-shaped story, and to make all my therapists, including Artemis herself, fall in love with me. That attending to Artemis should bring Aphrodite so prominently into view seems surprising until I remember the story of Hippolytus and how it is his monolatrous devotion to Artemis that provokes Aphrodite's disastrous intervention. It is as though exclusive attention to Artemis--which she plainly demands--inevitably stirs Aphrodite to come forward. I understand better now how it can be that so many of the Oriental and Cretan goddesses--Cybele, Bendis, Astarte, Ariadne, to name but a few--are associated with both Artemis and Aphrodite, as though in some inescapable way they are so essentially complementary as to be one.

I have seemingly always known I am no monotheist. Yet it is too simple to leave Artemis with that affirmation--and denial. I know that she is still the goddess to whom I now must attend. Her wilderness may indeed be a liminal space but it is precisely the character of such "betweens" that while one is in them that is where one is, that is all that there is. This is a time for me to turn away from that reliance on Aphrodite's ways which has for so long sustained me, and to begin to learn what is meant by the phrase "monogamy of soul" which came to me so powerfully a few weeks ago as defining my present task. It was the cruel mystery inherent in that phrase that led me directly to this attempt to expose myself to Artemis' mysteries. This birth into the rest of my life still feels incredibly painful. I would still find it almost unbearably difficult to join my voice with Iphigenia's as she, from her funeral pyre, cries:

Dance!

Let us dance in honor of Artemis . . .

O lift your voices

Lift them to Artemis

In honor of my fate

And of my dying[40]

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SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY · 1897 ·

NOTES:

1. Wilter Bynner trans., "Iphigenia in Tauris," in David Grene and Richmond Lattimore, eds., The Complete Greek Tragedies, Vol. III: Euripides, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press,) p.

2. David Grene trans., "Hippolytus", in Grene and Lattimore, Tragedies: Vol. , Euripides, p. 166.

3. Richmond Lattimore, trans., The Odyssey of Homer (New York: Harper and Row, 1965) p.

4. Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," in Joan Riviere, trans., Collected Papers, Vol. 4, (New York: Basic Books, 1959) p. 368-407.

5. In the months before Artemis' birth her mother, seeking to hide from Hera, moves through the world as a wolf; Artemis herself, we are told, was born in that hour before dawn when only the wolves can see.

6. Diane di Prima, Loba (Berkeley, Wingbow Press, 1978) p. 76.

7. Martin P. Nilsson, A History of Greek Religion (New York: Norton, 1964) p. 29.

8. Di Prima, p. 81f.

9. Walter F. Otto, The Homeric Gods (Boston, Beacon, 1954) p. 86.

10. M. D. Herter Norton, "Archaic Torso of Apollo," Translations from The Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke (New York, Norton, 1938) p.181.

11. May Sarton, Journal of A Solitude (New York, Norton, 1973) p. 129.

12. May Sarton, "The Autumn Sonnets, Collected Poems 1930-1973 (New York: Norton, 1974) p. 385ff.

13. cf. Philip E. Slater, The Glory of Hera (Boston: Beacon, 1968) p. 12; Sarah B. Pomeroy, Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves (New York: Schocken, 1975) p.10.

14. Otto, p. 82.

15. James Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology (New York: Harper & Row, 1975) p. 108.

16. Martin P. Nilsson, Greek Folk Religion (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1961) p. 16.

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17. Richmond Lattimore, trans., The Oresteia of Aeschylus (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953) p. 39.

18. W. K. C. Guthrie, The Greeks and Their Gods (Boston, Beacon, 1955) p. 100.

19. Lewis Richard Farnell, The Cults of the Greek States Vol. 2 (Chicago: Aegaean Press, 1971) p. 435f.

20. W. H. Auden, "Ode to Gaea", Collected Poems (New York: Random House, 1976) p. 423ff.

21. Nilsson, History of Greek Religion, p.49.

22. Richmond Lattimore, trans., The Iliad of Homer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) p. 431f.

23. James Hillman,"Anima," Spring 1973, p. 97-132.

24. Sarton, Journal, p.11.

25. Mary M. Innes, trans., The Metamorphoses of Ovid (London: Penquin, 1955) p.79.

26. Innes, Metamorphoses, p.63.

27. Chris Downing, "A Thank Offering," Inward Light Fall 1967, p. 24f.

28. Claude Levi-Strauss, Tristes-Tropiques (New York: Atheneum, 1974) p. 333.

29. Susan Griffin, Woman and Nature (New York: Harper & Row, 1978) p. 103.

30. Otto, Homeric Gods, p. 87.

31. Carl Kerenyi, Zeus and Hera (Princetion: Princeton University Press, 1975) p.51.

32. Arthur Bernard Cook, Zeus, Vol. II, Part 1 (Cambridge: University Press, 1925) p. 457.

33. Farnell, Cults, 2, p. 447.

34. Kerenyi, Zeus, p. 53.

35. Nilsson, History of Greek Religion, p. 112.

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36. Farnell, Cults, 2, p.543.

37. Innis, Metamorphoses, p. 61.

38. Lattimore, Odyssey, p. 105.

39. Charles R. Walker, trans., "Iphigenia in Aulis," in David Grene and Richmond Lattimore, eds., The Complete Greek Tragedies; Vol. IV; Euripides (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958) p. 332.

40. Walker, "Iphigenia in Aulis," p. 377.