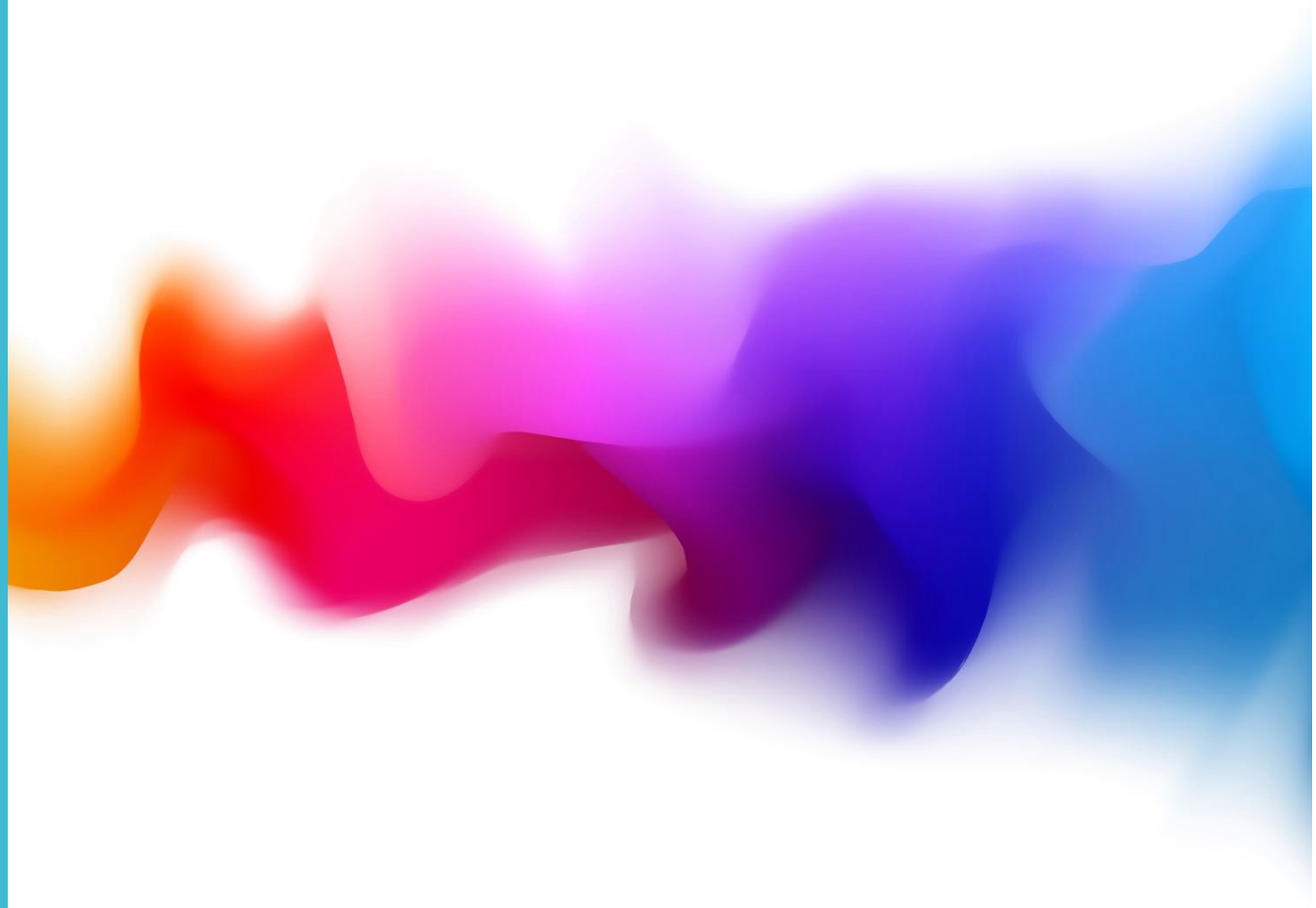
Rise of the Feminine

Reimagining Hope



The Feminine Aspect

"Feminine"

"It would seem there is a reactionary process that has been raised beyond the quiet, subversive or discrete suppression of feminine expressions, to the outright brutality and suppression of women and their feminine modes of being.

John W. Coakley, ***Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators, 2006***

The Feminine Aspect

"Feminine"

Public examples include the rise of rape as a weapon of war, political regimes restricting the involvement of women in community and educational endeavours, women left to raise and sustain children from unwanted pregnancies in dire circumstances where the men have left to seek a better life for themselves, a politically-indulgent push against abortion largely ordained by a male dominated authority and a rise of gender-based domestic violence."

John W. Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators, 2006*

Taliban bans 'even the sound of a female voice' in public across Afghanistan as UN denounces new virtue laws

In short:

Women's voices and faces are forbidden to be heard or shown in public in Afghanistan after virtue laws were introduced by the Taliban, three years after the militant group retook control of the country.

The UN head in Afghanistan said the laws were a "distressing vision" for the future of the country and condemned the impact on the rights of Afghan women and girls.

What's next?

"Day by day, they are trying to erase women from society," a Kabul woman who will be subject to the ban said in response.

- ABC News 27.7.24

Historical precedents

- Greco-Roman Era - Women don't have real souls
- Constantine - Pagan destruction
- Canon law - Council of Nicaea
- Celtic women - Synod of Whitby
- Medieval suppression - Demonic spirits
- 2024!

No roles in the church - Male only authority

Defining the Feminine Aspect

"Feminine"

"We have been immersed in a patriarchal society for so long that our ideas and images of the feminine must themselves be prejudiced . . .

I primarily continue to use the confusing, if not ambiguous, word feminine because it has a long history of development within the Jungian tradition."

Mozol p.3

Features:

Emotive, relational, nurturing, care-focused, grounded, experience-based. It engages with its needs, natural urges, and symptoms.

Integrated Soul

"Masculine"

The complimentary aspect to the feminine character aspect is called the masculine, by Jung.

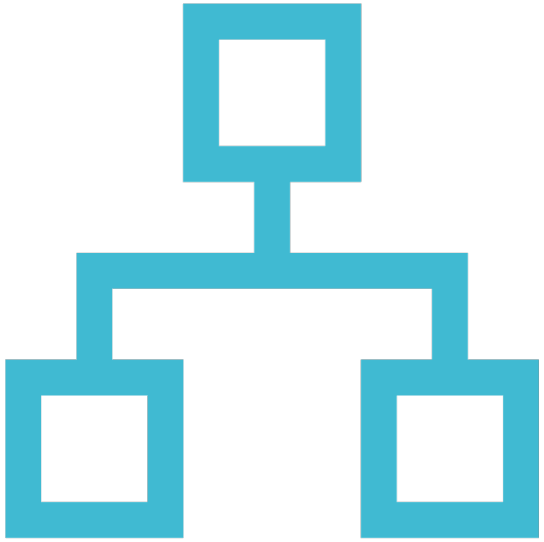
Features:

Conceptual, ideas, system-based, power and control orientation.

Tendency to extract meaning from experience and then concretise the meaning further into rules.

Both are core to the human psyche.

Integration – a life lived with both aspects of our being in Balance.



Two sets of powers are based on commonly accepted different authorities:

an authority derived from outside the structures of the church

and one derived from within those structures

Feminine Power

The power of women represented in the medieval literature suggests a basic problem:

. . . the relationship between the women's powers and the powers of ecclesiastical men.

"Late-medieval works profiling women are indeed full of stories about their powers: the women prophesy, they warn, they advise, and some- times they expound upon ideas, **all from a direct knowledge or consciousness of things divine."** *(Coakley)*

Authentic experiential knowledge cannot be 'controlled' by the church or patriarchal systems.

The feminine intuitiveness derived from an emotional response to deep spiritual awareness gives the individual immense agency over their own spiritual certainties.

So where's the HOPE?

Is this only a human cultural / societal trend, perennially setting men against women?

Or is there a deeper movement going on?

So where's the

HOPE?

[20] Wisdom shouts in the streets.

She cries out in the public square.

[21] She calls to the crowds along the main street,

to those gathered in front of the city gate:

[22] "How long, you simpletons,

will you insist on being simpleminded?

Proverbs 1: 20-22

So where's the HOPE?

- [23] ***Come and listen to my counsel.***
  I'll share my heart with you
  and make you wise.

  Proverbs 1: 23

Sophia : Wisdom

"Wisdom [is] a reflective principle, simultaneously creating and created in a seamless dance of divine becoming. Her proper role is not to be worshipped but to be actualized in the material of our own lives. . . Wisdom is about transformation."

Cynthia Bourgeault

Sophia : Wisdom

Wisdom is the feminine voice of faith

Jesus demonstrated a life lived deeply connected to his soul's experience –

loving and compassionate toward all regardless of their condition,

in the place of their being.

Sophia : Wisdom

Are we are in a time of a rising Wisdom awareness?

- **Institutional religious structures declining**
- **Spiritual searching commonplace**
- **Small groups wanting to share faith in the context of their life experiences**
- **Universal faith – recognising the deep imprint of the divine on all humans**
- **Need to 'love our planet'**

So where's the HOPE?

[23]Come and listen to my counsel.
I'll share my heart with you
and make you wise.

Hope lies in our faith that the deep wisdom of Sophia is becoming more powerful, more visible and more potent.

The brutal suppression of the feminine attributes of caring, nurturing, respect of all no matter their origins or location alerts me to this.

HOPE

"The reason, as far as I know, is that the promise that we are made in the Divine image, that we are a microcosm of the Infinite. . . We can directly experience eternal truths.

It's not just an intellectual thought or a theological axiom, but is happening right now, in our bio-spiritual depth. In the moment of now, amid all we celebrate and suffer, there is the promise of paradise."

Beverly Lanzetta, "Qualities of Contemplation," Unpublished Lecture, June 15, 2022.

So where's the

HOPE?

- ***23 Come and listen to my counsel.***
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  Proverbs 1: 23

What are we called to?

So where's the

HOPE?

What are we called to?

"The man answered: 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!" Luke 10:27-28

Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbour, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. Rom 13:8

Love of Sophia, Self, Others and our Planet

Love is anything but sentimental. In fact, it is the most real and creative form of human presence.

Love is the threshold where divine and human presence ebb and flow into each other.

JOHN O'DONOHUE

Rise of the Feminine

FOLLOW THE FLOW

Knowing her first, I felt her stream run smooth,
skip playfully on rocks
and fall down liquid hills.
“Follow the flow,” was her advice.
I did not understand.

In later years I met her once again.
she was a river grown,
swollen with life,
pulled by strong currents down toward unknown
seas.
One felt the peaceful eddies, and the deep longing
for the ocean’s bed,
and she ran blue as the late summer years she bore.
“Follow the flow,” she said.

Then there was parting, and we did not meet again
until one year when frost was chain about us.
I wondered, then, if she had frozen, too,
into the static waiting of old age,
reverting back to narrow winter stream.
But when I saw her eyes, I knew
she was the Pacific now, and stretched horizon and
beyond.
Ice could not crust on her
nor the frost chain
but rather wisdom pulled her tides.
Her deeps were heavy with the weight of love.

I understood, then, what it is to follow flow:
Someday, one meets and mingles with the sea.

Carol Bailock RSCJ, *Coral Castles*

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