

HEKATE, THE THREE-HEADED GODDESS: THE WHOLE FEMININE

(Reclaiming the Vertical Wisdom Axis)

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the nature and meaning of the Three-Headed Goddess as manifested by the Goddess Hekate. The three-fold setting that will be reviewed is not the intra-feminine arrangement of Maiden-Mother-Crone but rather the three-fold spatial dimensions of Sky, Earth and Underworld. These realms suggest a vertical perspective of what may be called the ‘whole’.

The rise of consciousness, by introducing duality, obscured the experience of “Oneness.” Rather, the “whole” is now bifurcated and experienced in a dualistic manner, for example, Good and Evil, Life and Death. In this study the existential duality that is examined is that of gender: feminine and masculine. This split of the whole introduces two axes which are labeled vertical and horizontal. Because much of masculinity is associated with movement and physical action, it occupies the horizontal axis. The feminine, less disposed to the physicality of horizontal advance, is more inclined to pursue a vertical orientation perhaps due to a home or nesting predisposition. Accordingly, in terms of the spatial arrangement of sky, earth and underworld (and the wisdom that each contains) is taken to be feminine. In this context, each vertical dimension represents one of Hekate’s three heads which, when combined, reveal not only the total feminine but also the ‘whole’ of wisdom.

In the following, the Goddess Sophia is linked with the celestial head and is keeper of Sky Wisdom; Demeter, the Greek Goddess of Grain, associates with the middle head and is keeper of Earth Wisdom; the Goddess Persephone, Queen of Hades, occupies the Netherworld head and is keeper of the Underworld Wisdom. Prior to Persephone’s mythic appearance, the ancient Goddess Hekate was associated with the Underworld. From another perspective Hekate, herself, encompassed the three dimensions. She relinquished the Sky head when patriarchal order ended the matrifocal system. To a large degree the Earth head was also taken over by the patriarchy. Only in the Underworld was Hekate able to keep a head. In Greek mythology she was the unofficial ruler of the Underworld (while Hades was the nominal ruler) until Persephone entered the mythic scene. Hekate’s long reign in the Underworld predates Persephone’s arrival (in fact, Hekate initially served as Persephone’s guide in the Underworld). Hekate’s long tenure in Underworld has given her access to the Underworld’s wisdom. Given this development, both Persephone and Hekate will be reviewed as carriers of Wisdom of the Underworld.

In Greek mythology, the three brothers, Zeus, Poseidon and Hades, occupied the vertical dimensions: Zeus, the principal Olympic God, usurped the Sky. Poseidon ruled the Earth’s Seas while Hades established a token regime in the Underworld. (The study follows Marija Gimbutas’ conclusions that prior to the influx of patriarchal societies in Greece/Old Europe there reigned a Goddess-centered society that was guided by fertility Goddesses. These old Goddesses were overturned by patriarchal rule.)

The study initially examines the natures of Hekate and of the Triple-Headed Goddess. This is followed by a review of the concept of vertical-wisdom and horizontal-action axes. Subsequently a commentary is made of the wisdom associated with each of the spatial dimensions: Underworld, Earth and Sky. The study also appraises the consequences of masculine occupation of the vertical axis. The study ends with a commentary regarding activation of the feminine Vertical Wisdom Axis. At the Appendix, the concepts of World Soul and Cosmic Soul are reviewed in regards respectively to Sophia and Hekate. The validity of the study rests on whether the analysis provides an appropriate appraisal of the Total Feminine exemplified by the Goddess Hekate.

## HEKATE, HER NATURE

Part of Hekate's nature is found in her attributes as Triple-Headed Goddess. Another part is found in her earlier manifestation in Crete's Minoan Civilization as fertility Goddess of death and regeneration. Her worship also existed in Anatolia and Thrace, and pre-dates Zeus' coming to the region. ([Wilkinson: 37) In one tale, Hekate belongs to the Titan race and is reported to be one of the few Titans that Zeus did not confine. It is also said that Hekate maintained a right, as a Titan, to a certain amount of the resources of Sky, Earth and Sea.

Hekate is perhaps best known as Goddess of Witches as well as guardian of entrances and Goddess of the Crossroads. The reason for the latter title is Hekate's ability to apprehend the future and therefore be informed of which road best serves the traveler's needs. Johnston submits that Hekate serves as a guide through passages, for example, guiding Souls into Hades. Consequently, she is found at liminal locations that allow transition such as doors and crossroads, even the Moon. (The double-faced God Janus is also associated with Hekate.) The animals generally associated with her are dogs, especially Cerberus, Hades' guardian, snakes and owls. Her main symbols are torch and keys. The torch sheds light in order to make one's way in the Underworld. The key allows entry into Hades. She favored darkness such as the New Moon. As Crone, Hekate lived with little assistance from others. It is said that her abode was a cave in Hades. She displayed a strong maternal interest and became protector of the new born and the oppressed. She is depicted as hag but in fact is a beautiful powerful unmarried Goddess. Such appearance reflects more an intent to be left alone than a malevolent attitude. And it is in this being-left-alone existence that Hekate awaits the return of the Triple-Headed Goddess.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Hekate's myth is found in the Hesiod's "Hymn to Hekate," written in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century (BCE). In that work, the author noted that she "is honored most by all the immortal gods themselves." Hesiod also wrote that "Zeus himself pays her homage." In the Chaldean Oracles of the Second Century (CE) Hekate and Zeus were seen as the supreme Goddess and God. In that treatise she was considered the Cosmic Soul. Such homage provokes the question: Why? Why was she so favored?

Jenny Strauss Clay is of the opinion that Hekate merits such favor because she plays the important role of mediating between humanity and the Gods. She has power to take an

individual's offerings to the Gods in order to bring forth what is desired, or to deny the supplicant's request. Without Hekate's mediating services humans and gods would remain apart. (In Christianity, Mary has taken over the role of intercessor.)

It is maintained that Hekate's frightening aspects, such as carrying all kinds of snakes, petrification, and sending demons out into the night, were more a ploy to insure that she would not be interfered with and to ward off any effort to weaken her foot-hold grip in the Underworld. Zeus' respect of Hekate may have caused other Gods not to interfere with Hekate's actions. They may have readily left Hekate to her witching ways because her actions were generally taken to be of darken matter. The Gods may have feared to cross Hekate for she had power to permit or deny desires.

Hekate in her Triple-Headed manifestation is a powerful regenerative Goddess. Although she lost much of her eminence in the Sky and Earth due to patriarchal possession, she was left with a vulnerable stance in the Underworld. Behind the veil of Queen of witches, sorcery, and magic, Hekate waits for the propitious moment to launch a feminine reclamation of the three heads. Her image of witch may be tied to her earlier role as fertility Goddess of death and regeneration. In the patriarchal Hellenic culture, her orientation no longer was fertility but securing the Head connected to the Underworld. She waits to end the patriarchal dominion on Earth and Sky, regain her former influence in those realms, and re-establish the Total Goddess. Zeus may have banked that a patriarchal Olympus would outlast Hekate's waiting and therefore cast her as a generally harmless force attending to her witch's brew.

It may be said that Hekate has launched her "return." Her ultimate success may be found in a subsequent transformation of the Trinity into a Quaternity that holds a gender balance of two male and two female projections. In this regard, Caitlin Matthews submits an interesting Gaelic prophesy held on the island of Iona regarding the "coming" feminine. She refers to Fiona MacLeod's report that the prophesy foretells that the feminine now known as the Bride of Christ and Daughter of God will come divinely as a woman to save humanity anew. (Matthews: 218-219) Hekate's independence in the Underworld together with Persephone's Queenhood of the Underworld supports the contention that the "Return of the Goddess" was at the brink of unraveling. The Hekate-Persephone front to a large extent, neutralized masculine encroachments while Lord Hades made no great effort to eject Hekate from her entrenched position in the Underworld.

Hekate's role as Mother is generally given little attention particularly if compared to Demeter, Persephone's mother, who in seeking her daughter's return, unleashed her power (stopped food production). This caused Zeus to back down and have Lord Hades returned Persephone to Earth during the Spring and Summer seasons. During Persephone's Winter stay in Hades, Hekate became her surrogate mother.

Hekate presents a mixed bag of attributes and intentions. That she is feared as well as respected and even liked maybe due to her power to give or withhold what is desired. It is necessary to keep in mind that no matter how Zeus let Hekate alone, her energies were given to plot a return as a Triple-Headed Goddess. Until then the primary face of the Underworld that she gave was frightening. But within that cover she also played a benevolent role, for example, her attending to

the Souls that constantly came to Hades. In sensing the dread that the newly dead experience, Hekate met the disembodied Souls at life's end and guided them through Hades doors to begin a spirit existence.

It is opined that Hekate carries the flag of feminine resistance to masculine domination. Male occupation is against the natural order of things. Her intent, therefore, is not a negative pay-back, that is, defeating the masculine. Rather, the object is to have the masculine gender behave appropriately so that it would be open to feminine wisdom.

### THREE-HEADED GODDESS

A three-headed Goddess was known in Greek mythology, such as: Selene, the Moon, (with her own tripartite nature of new, half and full Moon), Artemis, the earthly huntress (who also had her own three-headed projection), and Persephone (Underworld). At times Hekate would replace Persephone as the underworld Head. Hekate, Moon (Selene), and Artemis revealed a close relationship. Hekate shares with Artemis the title "Enodia" ('the one on the streets' who guards the entrance). Hekate also shares with Artemis an Asia Minor heritage and effects a strong identification with the darkness of the Moon.

The tripartite system of Selene, Artemis and Persephone reveals a vertical configuration. The tripartite system of Hekate, Demeter and Sophia contains not only a vertical arrangement but also a wisdom orientation emanating from each of the three vertical spaces: Sky, Earth, and Underworld. In context of Wisdom found in the Underworld the most notable Goddess would be Hekate (long tenured in Hades' darkened halls). For the Earth or middle space, Demeter, Goddess of grain and harvest casts a bountiful beam of wisdom on humanity. For the Sky domain Sophia, the creative spirit of the heavens, disseminates a celestial wisdom. On occasions, Hekate, herself, may be seen as a compilation of these three Goddesses. This is to say that the Complete Hekate is the amalgam of the Sky, Earth and Underworld Goddesses who occupy the different realms of the vertical wisdom axis.

Persephone, although a second tier Goddess, could certainly fit the Underworld designation not only because of her close relationship with Hekate but also because Persephone earned that position after becoming Queen of Hades. Persephone displayed little wisdom of the Underworld before becoming its Queen but became an apt learner and subsequent co-ruled of the Underworld with a corresponding amassed wisdom.

In regards to the wearer of the Earth Head, Demeter, in comparison to Artemis, projects a greater depth of experience relative to Earth-Wisdom. Demeter's responsibility for the basic commodity that preserves life, food, suggests that she possesses deep if not primal Earth-Wisdom. The search to find her daughter Persephone reveals a tenaciousness to resist any encroachments on her fief. Demeter reflects deep wisdom regarding the nurturing of the Earth.

Hekate has deep ties with the Moon. Johnston writes that "the picture of Hekate as a moon goddess is familiar to classicist— too familiar perhaps." (Johnston: 30) While the Moon represents the Sky squarely, it still may not be the best representative of Sky Wisdom largely because the Moon is tied to the Earth's gyrations. The Greek Goddess of Wisdom, Athena, as

great as she might be, also does not best fit the best representative of Sky Wisdom because of her strong association with Olympus' patriarchal order. Finding a more appropriate Sky Wisdom entity than the Moon required seeking beyond Greek mythology.

The search led to Sophia, Goddess of Wisdom, whose existence was mostly hidden. To quote Caitlin Matthews: "But if the Goddess has been displaced from her territorial home all this long while, where has she been residing in the interim? The Goddess simply did not die out or go into cold storage two thousand years ago to be revived today in the same forms she manifested then....Sophia is the great lost Goddess who has remained intransigently within orthodox spiritualities...she is allowed to be a messenger, a mediator, a helper, a handmaid; she is rarely allowed to be seen in charge, fully self-possessed and creatively operative." (Matthews: xxv) Sophia sought to survive in the Sky as did Hekate in the Underworld. But the Sky was dominated by a powerful masculine presence while in Hades the masculine was rather passive. The important point to be made here is that the Sophia survives as best as possible and awaits the time for return (that Matthews thinks is now).

In Hebrew and Christian narratives Sophia represents wisdom incarnate. She is Goddess of the Wise and philosophers. In Jewish tradition, Sophia or Chokmah (Shekinah), was highly acclaimed. It is reported that King Solomon had a statue of Chokmah in the temple. In early Catholicism Sophia took on the aspect of the Holy Spirit (third element of the Trinity) or was considered the feminine entity to be added to the masculine Trinitarian model. Sophia was also said to be Yahweh's bride. As Spirit of God she "hovered over the waters" prior to igniting Creation. She was linked to the Dove (furthering her credentials for a Sky-bound Goddess). In that Sophia represented unadulterated Truth, she embodied the Devine Feminine filled with grace. She outlined the way that led to Heaven and salvation. It is thought that Sophia's demise in Christianity came about because there was fear that the presence of other Goddesses related to wisdom, such as Isis, would lead astray the congregation and therefore the Church Fathers suppressed Sophia's worship. At the same time, Sophia played a central role in Gnostic religions. Although her worship went underground after Gnosticism lost favor, her image of World Soul survived because as creatrix she represented humanity's summation.

Sophia manifests herself under different semblances because wisdom is found in many facets of human existence. When Sophia's Sky Wisdom is added to the Wisdom of Earth that Demeter disseminates and the rebirth-wisdom of the Underworld that Persephone promulgates, the Three-Headed Hekate indeed encompasses a total wisdom.

### THREE BRANCHES OF WISDOM

Underworld Wisdom. Hekate's long struggle to keep her Underworld crown out of the patriarchy's clutches suggests that the Wisdom of the Underworld is charged by the feminine with the ability to endure and wait for the "right time." The torch that Hekate carries underscores the wisdom of hope, of shedding light on truth. Hekate espouses a wisdom that comes from delving into darkness and the practices that may be found therein. And for this she was branded witch. Psychologically, the Wisdom of the Underworld enables the individual to raise

unconscious strata to consciousness. But to do this the individual needs the skill to decode symbols.

In mythic time feminine influence in the Underworld increased when Persephone married Lord Hades. As Queen of the Underworld (where the Souls go to after death) she also became Queen of the Souls. If wisdom of the Underworld flows, in part, from the mysteries of darkness, it also flows from an encounter with Soul. Persephone takes Hekate's wisdom of endurance to set in train the wisdom of rebirth which points to the way to Individuation and the embrace of Soul. Without access to the wisdom of rebirth, Individuation remains a sporadic exercise and takes on a linear process rather than the more meaningful spiral path. But access to the wisdom of rebirth is not easy to come by particularly for the masculine that is not disposed to endure, wait and explore darkness (the unconscious).

The Wisdom of Soul is difficult to activate since it takes much living before an individual can 'own' the experience of Soul. In general, the rare authentic encounters with Soul go by without acknowledgement mainly because most humans have not yet translated the concept of Soul into a personal actuality. Persephone advances the wisdom of rebirth largely because she accommodates to what life brings forth and, in doing so, opens the psyche to the process of rebirth and transcendence. Rebirth generally is precipitated after a round of toiling in psychological darkness. In brief, access to the Soul's Wisdom found in the Underworld depends on processing the contents of darkness and taking up the art of Individuation which, in turn, deepens the ability to love. Without the feminine, the Wisdom of the Underworld put forth by Lord Hades would indeed be a deadening experience. Regretfully much of masculinity takes in if not adhere to Lord Hades' ashen wisdom largely because of the difficulty to access the Underworld Wisdom forged by Hekate-Persephone.

Earth Wisdom. In Greek religion, Poseidon became ruler of the seas while the landmass itself was declared neutral grounds among the three brothers Gods. At the same time, Demeter, Goddess of Grain, broadened feminine preeminence on the land that was humanity's abode. The Wisdom associated with Earth relates to the meaning of life and Homo sapiens' evolutionary role. In short, Earth is where humans find purpose; it provides a wisdom that is steeped in Nature. Earth's Wisdom is gained by the interplay of living a creative inspirational and imaginative manner.

While Earth technically was a neutral ground among the Olympian three brothers, Poseidon, ruler of the seas, sought to suppress Demeter (who Poseidon might have seen as a rival to possess Earth) and therefore, become nominal ruler over both Sea and Earth. Demeter rampage after her own rape by Poseidon and her daughter's rape by Hades gave notice that the feminine, whether in the guise of mother or maiden, should no longer brook masculine impunity.

Humanity's evolutionary trek on Earth has provided opportunity to master the special gifts of consciousness and love. Earth provides a special wisdom that comes from living a Nature-Consciousness-based existence. In this context thought (and therefore Reason) is considered part of Nature. While Demeter is not portrayed as symbol of Logos, she is Goddess of the cultivated fields. She provides the human (farmer) with the consciousness needed to expand agrarian

knowhow and therefore advance Homo sapiens' prospects. In short, Demeter advances transformation: taking raw nature and changing it into a system that sustains human existence.

Demeter portrays the wombic wisdom that was accumulated over millenniums (where the birthing women brought forth produce as another of nature's fruits) and which provides the basis for the million-year-old Earthly Crone. (This Crone Wisdom differs from the Underworld Wisdom associated with the Collective Unconscious, keeper of the archetypal template of Homo sapiens' instinctual nature.) Earth Wisdom provides knowledge of how to "feed" the Life Force when under attack by the Death Force. Demeter is a champion of the Life Force. This characteristic is found in the mythic tale of her daughter's (Persephone) rape by Hades, God of Death. Demeter does not back away but opposes Death. The Wisdom of Earth is singularly pro-life. In this regard, Earth Wisdom is found in nature healing, that is, knowing which nature elements have healing powers.

Demeter's myth provides an added dimension to Earth Wisdom: wisdom is tied to truth. In the myth not only is her daughter raped by Hades, Zeus' youngest brother, but she herself is raped by Zeus' younger brother, Poseidon while Demeter was seeking her daughter. Thus inflamed, Demeter would not cooperate in any way until her daughter was returned. Although Zeus told her to desist, Demeter decreed that there would be no food, no nourishment; she would allow the Death Force to prevail. In this situation, truth was more demanding than nourishment. Demeter took truth to the brink: without truth life is false; with truth wisdom has value.

In the myth, Zeus and Hades backed down. Life successfully opposed Death and Demeter return to provide nourishment. Nature again would sustain the Life Force. In closing it may be said that where Underground Wisdom relates to Soul and rebirth, Earth Wisdom is tied to nature-body and truth.

As an aside issue, Demeter's rebellion may be seen as the first feminine protest to patriarchal dominance. She inspires the feminine quest for equality and resistance to patriarchal impunity. Given their lack of a wombic experience, on the one hand, and tendency to rape (rape of nature), on the hand, men will find it difficult to access Earth Wisdom

Sky Wisdom. Zeus, the Sky God of invading Aryans, governed from the Heights of Olympus, the Heaven of Greek religion. He ruled in a singular manner often with impunity and favoritism. The Heavens brings humans to the threshold of beholding the mystery of the Cosmo. Of particular interest is the wisdom associated with Creation's intent and its purpose. Sky Wisdom touches upon the Universe's mysteries and ultimate meaning.

Sophia, the Greek name for wisdom, is conceived as the Goddess of Wisdom or the Creator's feminine companion (bride) if not helper. Sophia, under Medieval Catholic formation, took on seven daughters or 7 Pillars of Wisdom: grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, music, arithmetic, geometry and astrology. With this formulation, Sky Wisdom divulges how to live in harmony within the Cosmos.

While Sky Wisdom is associated with logos and mind, it also is concerned with Soul, not the personal Soul found in the Underworld, but with the World Soul and its efforts to preserve the

‘goodness’ of Creation. Similar to Demeter, Sophia can act harshly. If not attended to in the first instance, Sophia may not help when petitioned. Also, as Demeter, Sophia is keen on the presence of justice.

Although it is Hekate, Savior, who guides the personal Soul to cross Hades’ entrance and begin a transpersonal existence, it is thought that the Wisdom of the Sky assists humans to cross the bar and workout the species’ transpersonal destiny. The immensity of the Sky not only causes it to have a greater store of wisdom to grasp but also that its contents are difficult for humans to integrate. Mystics, however, may have a predisposition to tune into the Sky’s deep wisdom.

Perhaps Sophia’s greatest source of wisdom rests in her capacity of Creatrix. As the Spirit of God that hovers over the waters, she sparks Creation. In this guise her wisdom activates fathomless creativity. In a different guise, she occupies the seat of the Trinitarian Holy Spirit which labors to hold in the post-creation the wholeness that existed in pre-creation. Access to Sky Wisdom, in the first instance, may require a spiritual orientation but one that is personally owned, not borrowed and an extended capacity of mind (to absorb the Seven Pillars of Wisdom).

In contrast to the Underworld where Wisdom is centered on Soul and on Earth where Wisdom is centered on Body, the Wisdom of Sky rests largely on Spirit. That is to say, if Underworld Wisdom assists the individual to become an authentic Self and Earth Wisdom aids the human to live a full mortal life, Sky Wisdom provides humanity the way to access the Godly. Sadly, if humans in some manner do not engage the feminine divinity, they remain undernourished if not insecure awaiting the return of the full-blown Goddess. In this guise, the waiting humans project symbols, such as the Grail Chalice, to “incarnate” the missing feminine. Meanwhile in the Catholic world view, Sophia is recast as Bride of Christ, or as Daughter of God or as the Divine Spirit but never alone in her full feminine sovereignty. Of particular interest is the Goddess’ recast as the Black Madonna which wraps the Goddess in multi-layers of suppression. Much work lies before the modern woman in order to uncover Sophia’s unadulterated nature, particularly her creative prowess. The woman who seriously seeks may indeed encounter Sophia, and when such occurs, the feminine opens her creative depths and Sophia becomes a mystical companion disseminating Sky Wisdom.

## VERTICAL-WISDOM AND HORIZONTAL-ACTION AXES

The study advances a two axis schemata: vertical and horizontal. It is held, a priori, that wisdom is more likely to be found through the vertical layered axis. But the implementation of wisdom gathered from the vertical axis is more likely to be achieved by action generated from the horizontal axis. The axes model flows from gender differences. There is sufficient life experience to acknowledge the existential nature of a gender division (although some might argue that gender difference is minor). Percentage wise, the human population is almost equally divided between the feminine and masculine genders which mean that the feminine experience of life is as broad as the masculine life experience. And while the feminine and masculine share many similarities, key differences exist; with the reproductive differences being the most definitive. The female’s capacity to birth (which includes a monthly menses discharge and a menopause development that ends monthly discharges) provides an experience completely



different from anything that males undergo; which means that women share a primal blood sisterhood.

Related to its reproductive capability is the existential feminine focus on rearing and nurturing. For the most part of human recorded history, masculinity has played a very secondary role in rearing and nurturing (although providing food and erecting habitations might be considered something akin to nurturing). The modern unfolding of the nuclear family, however, has provided masculinity with opportunity to develop and practice feminine attributes. Because of its rearing responsibility the feminine is somewhat prone to stay at place of birth to rear the next generation. This is not to say that they oppose movement. Rather, the point is that the place called 'home' tends to provide the support to rear children (unless of course, that the 'home' environment is dangerous).

The masculine experience of life has been less encumbered with domestic involvement. The early practice of hunting and to some extent, of war has made men prone to move, to discover, to seek, to conquer. In terms of the axes model, much of masculinity is about horizontal movement, the Grail Quest is an example of such movement. (It should be noted that Philo of Alexandria, in the First Century (CE) outlines a schemata similar to feminine and masculine axes. He envisioned Sophia, first born, the feminine creative energy, and Logos, second born, the masculine creative energy working together in shaping creation. Philo considered Sophia the creative vessel and Logos the masculine or active doer.)

Access to the vertical axis requires a discovery of its presence. Since femininity is more prone to stay put women have opportunity to encounter the vertical axis, accidentally, so to say, or during psychospiritual crisis, or when innate urges to attain wisdom surface. In prior years birthing, rearing and nurturing occupied the majority of feminine energies. Only a few had occasion to seek wisdom. Presently, with the life-span enlarged more women have time to pursue wisdom and comply with what may be called an imperative to find the best if not the ultimate manner in which to experience life. It is conjectured that this enduring urge comes from the million-year wombic experience that has been imbedded in the feminine. Now and then the cumulative inner knowing set certain women to delve into this inner cache of wisdom. It is maintained that this wisdom can be found vertically along the three spatial regions of Underworld, Earth and Sky. In this respect the vertical axis perhaps is best apprehended by Hekate's triple-headed nature that engulfs the vertical axis.

The Delphi Oracles provide an example of a feminine oriented wisdom axis where the feminine voice speaks in a prophetic (wisdom) manner. Initially the Delphi oracles were a feminine affair under the Goddess Gaia's oversight. Gaia set her daughter, the serpent Python, to protect the sanctuary. In Greek Mythology, Apollo killed Python. Thereafter, from about 1000 (BC), the God Apollo was the dominant God at Delphi. Although under masculine sway, the voice that dispensed the oracles remained feminine. The chief priestess at Delphi, the Pythia, when voicing prophesy, sat on a tripod chair over a fissure from which seeped vapors from the Underworld. It is thought that these vapors induced a trance-like condition through which the oracle was uttered. Although the priestess voiced the oracle, the male priests of Apollo made the interpretation. The masculine takeover of Delphi exemplifies the usurpation of the vertical feminine wisdom axis and the distortion that occurs when a masculine layer is put over the original feminine response.

Perhaps a clearer example of the axes may be found in the paintings that depict Mary's Assumption into Heaven. Mary is usually placed on center bottom as though rising upward. The Holy Ghost (Spirit in the Trinity) is found at center top to form the vertical axis with Mary. The introduction of Mary, in a manner of speaking, transforms the Trinity into a Quaternity and relates the vertical axis with the feminine. In this respect, the Holy Ghost's location on the vertical axis with Mary indicates that the former is feminine. It is now possible to view Sophia (the Spirit of God hovering over the water) as the figure at the center top.

It should be noted that Wisdom differs from knowledge. Wisdom has more to do with how to live life best while knowledge has more to do with working things out, for example, how best to till the soil. Men also seek how best to live life. In doing so, masculinity has advanced philosophical study as a way of arriving on the 'how to'. It is not surprising that in seeking to make 'things' work the masculine has been quite successful in advancing technology. Meanwhile, the masculine effort to find the best way to live life often gets entangled in what seems endless philosophical exchange. By way of comparison, the results of masculine endeavors differ significantly from the wisdom that the feminine earthly wombic experience gathers. The feminine projects the deep Earth while the masculine advances a somewhat practical earthy experience. Consequently, when a patriarchal system comes into being it tends to separate the feminine from her birth right. It is thought that the feminine under a matriist arrangement would fare well. In the lax patriarchal rule in Hades, Hekate represents the deep or "free" feminine. This is to say that her witch's brew may have more to do with wisdom than with omens. (Clearly not all women will achieve a Hekate-like wisdom.)

## CONSEQUENCE OF MASCULINE USURPTION OF THE VERTICAL WISDOM AXIS

As previously stated, the Vertical Axis was initially guided if not ruled by Divine Goddesses. Hera, Aphrodite and Artemis are examples of earlier powerful fertility goddesses that later played dependent roles under Zeus' suzerainty in the Sky. It is thought that Artemis was a powerful Goddess in Asia Minor while Hera may have been a local goddess of Heavens and Earth who was later overthrown by the arrival of the Greeks and their Sky God.

The Greek religion suppressed the earlier predominance of Goddesses. (For discussion of earlier fertility goddesses and arrival of patriarchal rule see the works of Gimbutas, Neumann and Sjo.) Rather it vaunts that Zeus, after defeating the Titans, divided the world with his brothers primarily to establish order and safeguard humanity. When compared to Christianity, the Greek heaven had a host of feminine Goddesses but they were subject to masculine prerogatives. Perhaps the situation in Christianity is more regressive in that no Goddess is visible in the celestial heaven. (Mary, the Mother of Jesus is called Queen of Heaven, but no particular divine role has yet been given to her.) The end result of the patriarchal system introduced by Aryans was masculine occupation of both vertical and horizontal axes.

Regardless of whether Hekate became Cosmic Soul in a Platonic sub-system such as in the Chaldean Oracles, the stark reality is that the masculine has occupied the feminine Vertical axis since the days of Olympus. The main question is not how to remove the masculine from the

Vertical but more so how to have the masculine occupy the Horizontal Axis effectively. In order to make a sensible commentary on the consequences of masculinity occupying the Vertical Axis, it is necessary to discuss, if briefly, the horizontal masculine Implementing-Action Axis.

Conceptually, the masculine Implementing-Action Axis gathers wisdom from the Feminine Vertical Axis and transforms such wisdom into policy formation. No position is taken as to which axis is the more essential. Rather they are of equal value; both are needed for the success of the human species. But the system becomes jammed when balance is missing as is the present case where the masculine gender dominates the Vertical Axis.

Success on the Vertical Axis is not automatic solely because the feminine occupies the axis. Rather, success depends on the competency of those directing the Vertical Axis. To safeguard the wisdom that comes forth in an understandable manner from the Vertical Axis, the feminine needs to partner logos with eros. Meanwhile success on the Horizontal Axis will depend on the competent application of logos with a dose of eros to implement right actions. Of course, there will be women highly skilled on the Vertical Axis who have greatly developed their inner masculine and, therefore, also are able to partake of the Horizontal Axis. The same may be said of certain men who demonstrate proficiency to act on both axes.

The Vertical Axis has a bottom (Underworld) and top (Sky) configuration. The Horizontal Axis has a beginning (quest) and end (goal) orientation. The Horizontal Axis traverses the Vertical Axis at the middle vertical realm (Earth). This diagramming reveals that the action tied to the Horizontal Axis will be largely played out on Earth which is still subject to twists of evolution. The axial model, however, remains theoretical until the masculine relinquishes control over the Vertical Axis. Ultimate success of this model will depend on feminine competence to dispense wisdom from the Sky, Earth and Underworld realms. Once operational the axes structure is likely to be informal with each gender recognizing and respecting the role of the other. But as long as masculine based technology continues to increase its destructive power, and the masculine continues to occupy the Vertical Axis humanity becomes highly vulnerable to major disaster.

With the feminine deprived of opportunity to gain competency in formulating wisdom, masculinity falls victim to its own misinformation: women have little to contribute to humanity's advancement. Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century there are societies that disregard feminine input regarding human development. In such atmosphere, the masculine unwittingly confuses thinking and knowledge for wisdom. It may be safe to say that much of masculine philosophical exchange is reduced to opinion or debate rather than wisdom-making. Given a general lack of eros in its conceptualization and self-image of "hardiness," masculine policy-making focuses on "being right," and "right" is often based on the "loudest" noise-making or superior arms. (Others might say that the prime masculine motivation is "overcoming" rather than being "right.") The viewpoint of war-as-solution is a good example of how masculine occupation of both axes is dangerous. The smartest and brightest males employ logos to come up with advanced technology and the means to employ it. In emitting little wisdom and eros, the masculine reinforces the tenet "killing-is-solution" (which goes back to Cain killing Abel). Under this masculine-techno shadow and absence of eros, coming wars will be more horrendous. The current era is filled with apprehension that the world's destruction is only a "button" away.

Masculinity's long usurpation of the Vertical Axis has undoubtedly contaminated feminine role modeling. In the contemporary era masculine manners and ways become models for the modern Western woman. The result is masculinized women, not necessarily in appearance as in the way they conduct themselves to gather and dispense wisdom. Modern-day women are apt to consider logos more important than eros, and while this is often true, gathering wisdom from its deep enclaves may only be done with expansion of eros.

Feminine uncertainty about dispensing wisdom suggests that few women could today operate the Vertical Axis. One issue is the feminine turning away from intuition and towards rationalization and logos. It would not be surprising, therefore, if the first United States woman president presented herself as a hawk in order to show her toughness. There is no doubt that masculinity has the "toughness" to employ nuclear weapons. (Hiroshima not only proved a willingness to utilize them but also demonstrated how to justify their use.) The masculine need to be right and win provides the platform for utilization of weapons of mass destruction. It seems that now humanity is paying the price for being deprived of Hekate's Triple-Headed Wisdom. Given the long period of feminine removal from the Vertical Axis, society is left with the ponderous question whether it is too late for the feminine to re-assert itself on the Vertical Axis and assemble sufficient wisdom that may cause masculine actors on the Horizontal Axis to advance policy that avoids humanity's impoverishment?

In that the working out of an Axes system is largely unknown, its setup will be no easy matter. But the idea of such a system is inspiring and sets a goal that requires equal female and male cooperation. Continuation of the lifting of patriarchal dominance will provide the occasion to assess the validity of the vertical and horizontal schemata.

## ACTIVATING THE VERTICAL AXIS

With little known about the process of how to establish an operational vertical axis that yields wisdom, it is difficult to comment on what needs to be done. However, there are glimpses, here and there, of how to proceed. In Delphi it is known that there were priestesses of the Great Mother who preceded Apollo's occupation of the shrine. In early Celtic society the role of Priestess of the Goddess was recognized as a sacred calling. The novel, "Mist of Avalon," told of priestess training in Celtic mysteries. Currently, women can obtain priestess training in Glastonbury as in other places. In the movie "Dune," the Bene Gesserit was a congregation or woman's order that sought influence with motive to direct humanity along a path of insight (wisdom) and stability.

In Europe, women found safety in convents if not a reprieve from masculine intimation, and opportunity to explore wisdom. Hildegard of Bingen was a Benedictine nun who, in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> Century, counselled the emperor and pope. By the Middle Ages women of wisdom left unprotected were condemned as witches and burnt. The fear of being branded a witch was very realistic after the publication of "Malleus Malificarum" in 1486. The book set out to do away with all witches (of which there were supposedly "many"). The authors attested that "females are carnal creatures and prone to the physicality of witchcraft." They also claimed that "the

characteristics of the feminine sex was inferior to those of their male counterparts giving them motive to access diabolical magic in order to increase their power.”

The volume, “Hekate: Her Sacred Fires” lists numerous groups that have devotional relationship with Hekate. It might serve the following discussion if the term “witch” generally associated with Hekate in a negative manner were replaced by “shaman,” and her witch’s brew be viewed as exercises in contacting the healing energies found in Sun, Earth and Body. Given feminine interest and the need for the feminine to maximize wisdom development, it is possible that healing and shamanic training of several years will be offered to young women prior to entry into higher education. The main objective would be to aid women to deepen their intuitive capabilities (before they are minimized by the rational teachings of higher education).

It is also possible that an increasing number of women will become priestesses, shamans or healers as sacred callings not only within conventional Western and Eastern religions but also in pagan traditions such as Wicca. It will be interesting to observe whether Mary will attract, within the Catholic denomination, her own priestesses. The meaning of the pronouncements of Mary’s Immaculate Conception and Assumption into Heaven without sin, have not yet been fully brought into consciousness. These declarations of Mary being born and subsequently dying without sin, erases Eve’s original punishment that was cast on all women. In Genesis, Yahwe condemns the feminine: your sorrow will multiply and in pain bring forth children and “they desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over you.”

It need be stressed that wisdom is not necessarily something that institutional religions promulgate. It may be more valid to argue that non-Christian devotees have less material to set aside in arriving at and advancing wisdom. The establishment of healer, shamanic or priestess training sets the foundation for fashioning the Vertical Wisdom Axis which, in turn, will go far to restore Hekate’s Triple-Headed nature.

The work before women of regaining the Vertical Axis is no simple matter. The fairy tale, “Six Swans,” points to the almost impossible task that is required of women. In the fairy tale the six brothers are turned into Swans. In order to redeem her brothers, the sister is to be silent for seven years and sew six jackets with thread obtained from prickly nettles. (Silence allows the feminine to tune into her intuition; prickly labor to gain discipline and perseverance.)

Once a training program becomes available and society’s patriarchal orientation continues to wane, it then becomes possible for the genders to address what sort of structure could make the Vertical and Horizontal Axes operational. Whatever the structure, it most probably will be informal. Initially it is not anticipated that many females will be attracted to take up wisdom. But over time, the power and mystique of feminine wisdom will increasingly attract particularly post-menopausal women.

## CONCLUDING COMMENT

The 'restoration" of the feminine can be said to have occurred when Three-Headed Hekate, Goddess of the Underworld, is able to reclaim her other two heads of Earth and Sky. In terms of

the axial system introduced in this paper, it is held that the feminine, due to various factors discussed above, occupies the vertical axis of Wisdom and the masculine occupies the horizontal axis of Action (questing) and Implementation. The full restoration actually depends not solely on regaining title to the Sky and Earth heads, but that the feminine integrates the Wisdom of the Sky and Earth with that of the Underworld. The continuing masculine occupation of the vertical axis broods ill for humanity in that the masculine is too prone to resort to conflict (with ever more destructive weapons) and killing as solution. In that preparing to take up the task, as well as assimilating such amount of Wisdom, is mind boggling few women may wish to mount the vertical axis. At the same time men who have integrated their feminine side may well opt to take up the vertical axis. (As there will be women with a well-developed masculinity who will opt to embrace the horizontal axis). Activation of the axial system will depend on the continuing waxing of the feminine movement and waning of the patriarchy which may cause menopausal women to seek the training that prepares them to engage the vertical axis.

The common description of Hekate is that of an old hag who inhabits the Underworld with powers of a witch, surrounded by ferocious dogs, holding a torch and embraced by snakes. It is contended that such a façade functions to hide Hekate's principle focus: evocate her Three-Headed nature. Hekate waits for the feminine movement to grow and the patriarchy to weaken before such occurs.

Rather than a negative sorceress, Hekate carries the feminine struggle not only to preserve but also to expand feminine wisdom. The dichotomy of Vertical and Horizontal Axes presented in this study provides a schemata that supports the deepening and display of feminine wisdom. For too long humanity has suffered from a lack of balance between the genders. Much is to be gained were the genders working together to address humanity's woes. Much wisdom is needed to address these woes. Regretfully, there is little understanding of the wisdom associated with the Sky, Earth and Underworld.

The basic problem regarding the human truth quest is masculine occupation of both the Horizontal and Vertical Axes. The end result is that action is emphasized, logos overvalued, competitiveness augmented and technology increasingly viewed as "solution." Little wisdom is compiled to guide communal action, and humanity digs itself deeper into the "wrong way" or "evolutionary dead end." In spite of this discouraging situation, the Hekate's myth underscores the coming of the feminine with a unique brand of wisdom. The feminine is the source of a singular wisdom that is different from that of the masculine. Accordingly, when combined appropriately they complement each other and bring about the balance that is needed to direct humanity into its evolutionary future.

## APPENDIX: WORLD AND COSMIC SOUL

Hekate's role as Savior (Soteira) is rooted in her role as guide, that is, guiding the Souls (of the deceased) into Hades to begin a transpersonal round of existence. This role may explain why the Chaldean Oracles considered Hekate the Cosmic Soul. As Cosmic Soul, Hekate takes on some of Sophia's features of World Soul. Before remarking on the Cosmic Soul, it seems necessary to comment on the nature of Soul itself. Commentators on the Soul, such as James Hillman, do not view Soul as 'thing' or 'content' and emphasize approaching and experiencing Soul through imagery. Robert Sardello spells out this position: "soul refers to the imaginative possibilities in our nature." (Sardello: 2)

In this study, Soul is taken as a content or "thing." The roots of the human Soul are found in the pre-creation Void where the all-encompassing Universal Soul lays dormant. It is held that with Creation the formerly undifferentiated Universal Soul disbursed itself out into a new universe. Through the process of evolution, a part of that disbursed Universal Soul found its way into the hominid evolutionary process and thereafter Soul was passed on to each human. In this context, the World Soul is a thing; it is the oneness of human Souls taken together. (It needs to be added that the Spirit of God that allegedly triggered Creation continues to have responsibility to gather all the disbursed elements of the Universal Soul in a network that maintains, in a differentiated manner, the Universal Soul's original wholeness.)

It is thought that Sophia was present at Creation as the Spirit (Bride) of God hovering over the waters and that it was Sophia who rendered the spark that brought on Creation. It is not only through her creative prowess and assumption of responsibility to care for her creation that Sophia projects the World Soul, but also because of her unmitigated commitment to wisdom, truth and justice.

In comparison to the personal Soul, the World Soul animates Life at the species level, while the former sustains life that has been animated by the World Soul. It follows that human development should not be solely an exercise of individualistic inner work, but that it include work in the external world. At bottom, the evolution of the species rather than of the individual is primary. This focus does not dismiss the value of personal inner work for without it individuals would have little to contribute. In short, while the individual Soul is of great value, greater is the species' World Soul.

Sardello notes in Sophia's nature a vertical dimension: heavenly, earthly and underworld. He wrote that the separation of the threefold Sophia (Hekate) "means that the unity that is the Soul of the World is something that now has to be accomplished through the efforts of human individuality oriented not to personal development alone, but for the sake of the world." (Sardello: 85)

It is thought that Sophia distills the essence of wisdom (how to live best), of truth (what to adhere to) and of justice (what is right to abide by). It is in carrying out this distillation process that

Sophia projects World Soul. In her guise as World Soul, Sophia represents humanity at Mother Gaia's halls to plea the case for its favorable evolution.

Whereas Sophia is called the World Soul largely for her creation and mediating roles, Hekate is called Cosmic Soul largely for her facilitating role. In guiding Souls, Hekate, according to the Chaldean Oracles, "ensouls the universe and all in it." (Johnson: 153) (It is not clear whether the Chaldean Oracles would consider the World Soul and Cosmic Soul different entities or more a play of words than anything else.) According to the Chaldean Oracles the Soul equates with life and that Hekate, as Cosmic Soul, is the "divine source of unending life for all time."

A question surfaces, how could Hekate, a mostly hidden and a generally avoided Goddess of the Underworld, reach such prominence as Cosmic Soul? According to Johnston, "Hekate produces from within herself the substance that "ensouls." Her reference to the "within" is helpful. Something within Hekate enabled her to achieve such high stature; and that something was her essence: a Complete Goddess (Goddess of All) as compiled by her Triple-Headed nature.

Johnston opined that it was Hekate's importance at crossroads that catapulted her to the eminent position of Cosmic Soul. Her role as guide was aggrandized in the Second Century when religion rather than philosophy was taken to reveal true wisdom. In this turn towards religion, divine transcendence was highlighted which created a pronounced gulf between the Gods and humans. With religion's rise, Hekate's stature as Goddess rose. It further grew as a transmitter, whether guide at the crossroad, guide to Hades, or escort at the temple gate. She was instrumental in helping humans obtain their yearnings. In this manner, Hekate became highly esteemed as an in-between the Gods and humans.

It may be argued that the Hellenic Hekate earned the right to be viewed as Cosmic Soul (similar to Persephone's earning the right to be true Queen of the Underworld). By the time the Chaldeans Oracles appeared (2<sup>nd</sup> Century, CE) Hekate's roles of guide and dispenser of wishes had earned her not only the right to be viewed Cosmic Soul but also to have access to the wisdom and power associated with her Triple-Headed nature. And it is held that this accumulation of wisdom and power casts Hekate as "savior" ("soteira").



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