Chapter Two

Imperfect Perfection—the Importance of Being Balanced

Avoid extremes; and shun the fault of such,

Who still are pleased too little or too much. (74)

—Alexander Pope, “Part II” An Essays on Criticism

In the English Augustan age, Alexander Pope warned about the danger of being extreme in composition and suggested that the best model of it was held in balance and harmony. Nowadays, this suggestion seems to be too conservative for composition, but it seems to be appropriate for the human psyche. The only way to be healthy mentally is to avoid extremes, to hold in balance with every aspect of the psychic tendencies.

In the preface of Addition to Perfection, a book that brings women’s psychic problems in the patriarchal society in focus, Marion Woodman has taken three female figures in the myth of Perseus as the representatives of women who become addicted to extremity: Athena, Medusa and Andromeda. In Woodman’s descriptions, Athena is a figure that abandons her femininity and “succumbs to calculating, intellectualized ambition” (7). She follows the principle of masculinity¹ to the extreme and tries to

¹ As a Jungian psychoanalyst, Woodman follows the archetypal patterns to define masculinity and femininity. She defines masculinity as the “goal-oriented, rational, perfectionist” tendencies (13) centered in the principle of Logos—the power of rationality and logic and intellectuality; on the other hand, she describes femininity as “taking responsibility for our bodies” as well as feelings and relationships (125). Femininity is represented by Eros, the Greek God of Love.
erase everything that is not included in this principle. Medusa is exactly the figure Athena wants to erase—she turns the once-beautiful Medusa into a monster and helps Perseus to kill her. As a figure full of irrational energy and repressed anger, “whose snaky locks twist and writhe in constant agitation, reaching...wanting more and more and more” (9), Medusa cannot help herself but kills people—she turns everyone who looks at her into stone. Andromeda, on the other hand, is a figure that represents femininity—she is compassionate and willing to sacrifice herself for others to the sea monster. Although Andromeda is later rescued by Perseus, who accidentally passes by, and is married to him, the image of Andromeda chained to a rock for sacrifice remains the most impressive posture in the myth.

Both Athena and Andromeda represent the extreme models for women: one is “the efficient, disciplined goddess” (10), the other is the sacrificial maiden in “her passionate loveliness frozen into marble immobility” and is willing to be “sacrificed to the perfection of death” (10). However, whether women become addicted to one kind of perfection or the other, Woodman finds there are a lot of problems as they are doing so. She observes:

If we look at the modern Athenas sprung from their father’s foreheads, we do not necessarily see liberated women. Many of them have proven beyond question that they are equal to or better than men: excellent doctors, excellent mechanics, excellent business consultants. But they are also, in many cases, unhappy women. (9)

Having indulged in the excellencies defined by the masculine rules, women find themselves hardly alive in their lives; but at the opposite extreme if they have
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fantasized themselves as the sacrificial maiden, they are still in danger of psychological death. As Andromeda still chained to the rock,

She has not been born into time, and therefore does not experience being alive. Her authority consists of what she ‘ought’ or ‘should not’ do in the future, or ‘if only’s’ of the past. Her authority for life takes on the form of rigid stone, rather than the living stone of personal relationship in the present. (189)

Being locked in the idea of sacrifice is chained “on the form of rigid stone” that hardly brings a healthy life for women. What an Andromeda really chooses is not a Perseus who rescues her from the limited rock but the sea monster who “demands her life as sacrifice” (161).

(I) The power of Medusa—the problems of Athena and Andromeda

People who want to be like the goddess of wisdom and reason or to be a selfless sacrificial maiden will always find themselves trapped in problematic situations. Why?

Woodman explains that the world of perfection is the state of “works of art” (Addiction to Perfection 10) that are unsuitable for the human psyche. According to Woodman’s explanation, the state of perfection belongs to the world of gods and goddesses that transcends proper human limits. The more human beings try to make themselves close to the world of perfection, the more negative power they will arouse within themselves. “Human beings tend to become like the god they worship, but fortunately for us, our agony does not allow us to become perfect robots” (16). In the Jungian view, there are always positive and negative sides contained in the nature of
humanity, and there are always masculine and feminine sides contained in every
person’s inner nature whether he or she is biologically male or female. It is
impossible for a human being to have one side alone. “However hard we try to
eradicate nature it eventually exerts its own value system and its own painful price”
(16).

Although Woodman puts her emphasis on women’s psychic problems, what she
notices along with the figures of Athena, Andromeda and Medusa is not only about
women’s experiences. Carol S. Pearson studies the psychic problems of both genders
according to archetypal patterns and has a similar observation with Woodman’s. In
The Hero Within: Six Archetypes We Live By, Pearson specifically points out six of
the most influential archetypes for the development of the human psyche: “there is a
rather predictable sequence of human development presided over respectively by the
archetypes of the Innocent, the Orphan, the Wanderer, the Warrior, the Martyr, and the
Magician” (4). On the one hand, Pearson suggests that each of these six archetypes
“projects its own learning task onto the world” (5) and it will be beneficial for
everyone to learn through these six tasks; on the other hand, she also notices that
patriarchal society has different influence upon men and women, she writes:

Because women are socialized to nurture and serve, and perhaps also
because women give birth, their lives tend to be overly dominated by the

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2 According to Jung, people carry within themselves both masculinity and femininity whether they are
biologically male or female. “If we are biologically female the ego is feminine and we carry within us
our own inner masculinity, what Jung calls the animus. If we are biologically male, the ego is
masculine and man carries within himself his own inner femininity, the anima” (Woodman, Addiction
to Perfection 14). Anima is the unconscious, feminine side of a man’s personality and Animus is the
unconscious, masculine side of a woman’s personality.
Martyr archetype even before they have had the opportunity to explore
the possibilities embodied by the Wanderer and the Warrior. Men, on the
other hand, are pushed into having control over their lives and power
over others, into being Warriors, before they know who they are. (7)

In addition to the traditional influence of patriarchal society, Pearson also points
out that “feminists generally are associated with the archetype of the Amazon” (9) in
the cultural viewpoint. What Pearson says about the archetypes of the Warrior and the
Martyr corresponds with Woodman’s discussion about the figures of Athena and
Andromeda. Athena, who was born “Full grown and in full armor” (Hamilton 29), is
one of archetypal figures of the Warrior that is easily labelled as the representation of
the masculine in patriarchal society, while Andromeda is a figure of the Martyr, the
feminine representative. Both of the authors worry about the phenomenon of people’s
addictions to certain archetypal figures, whether it is Andromeda, the martyr, or
Athena, the warrior.

Claiming that “People governed by an archetype will see its goal as ennobling
and its worst fear as the root of all the world’s problems” (5-6), Pearson warns us of
the danger of being trapped in just one archetype, for each archetype has contained
both of positive and negative sides within itself and being trapped in an archetype will
lead a person into a restricted psyche. Pearson specifically discusses the negative side
of each archetype, Woodman likewise uses Medusa as the figure that symbolizes the
negative side of human nature. On the other side of the perfect Athena and
Andromeda exists the hideous Medusa: “Athena is chained to Medusa as surely as
Medusa is chained to Athena” (10) and “The woman possessed by the Medusa /
demon lover\(^3\) is an Andromeda still chained to the rock” (189). The power of Medusa is innate in human nature just as that of Athena and Andromeda.

Although the ways Woodman and Pearson use to discuss the problems of human psyche are different, they share the same conception basically. Both of them use the Jung’s conception of archetype to discuss psychic problems: the archetypal figures such as Athena and Andromeda or the archetypes such as the Warrior and the Martyr. Before we discuss these archetypal figures or certain archetypes, the conception of the archetypes and that of the collective unconscious, which is always related to the previous conception, should be made clear.

(II) The archetypes of the collective unconscious

The term “the archetypes of the collective unconscious” contains two parts—the archetypes and the collective unconscious, however, Jung’s conceptions of the archetypes and the collective unconscious are inseparable—both of these terms are related to the common patterns of operations and perceptions of the human psyche. “The collective unconscious” is Jung’s broadened and deepened version of Freudian unconscious. Unlike how Freud emphasized the importance of the personal unconscious, the personal repressed and forgotten memories and experiences, Jung found that the unconscious is not as simple as one layer—there are two layers of the unconscious instead. The first layer is “basically identical to Freud’s conception of the unconscious” (Hopcke 14), and the second layer is the collective unconscious—the

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\(^3\) Woodman uses Medusa as a symbol of negative power, and the sea monster Andromeda is supposed to be sacrificed to is another Medusa—a monster with repressed anger and hideous appearance.
unconscious shared by the human race. The collective unconscious carries “certain impersonal, universal, fundamental characteristics of humanity” (Jung, Two Essays on Analytical Psychology 154) that are beyond personal limitation. Jung wrote: “through our unconscious we have a share in the historical collective psyche, we live naturally and unconsciously in a world of werewolves, demons, magicians, etc., for these are things which all previous ages have invested with tremendous affectivity.” (Jung, Two Essays on Analytical Psychology 92) Compared with the personal unconscious, the collective unconscious is more powerful and influential.

The origin of the term “archetypes” is from the “explanatory paraphrase of the Platonic eidos” (Jung, Archetypes and the Collected Unconscious 4) and Jung himself described it as “active living dispositions, ideas in the Platonic sense, that perform and continually influence our thoughts and feelings and actions” (Jung, The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche 154). Just like Plato considered that there are ideal forms that are “superordinate to the objective world of phenomena” (Stevens 39), Jung thought there are “archetypes” that are beyond the individual’s control and are involved in the formation of human psyche. The archetypes are the “patterns of psychic perception common to all humanity” (Hopcke 14) and they are contained in the collective unconscious. Jung developed this conception from psychoanalytic experiences and observations: “His broad knowledge of mythology, anthropological material, religious systems, and ancient art allowed him to see that the symbols and figures that continually appeared in many of his patients’ dreams were identical to symbols and figures that had appeared and reappeared over thousands of years in myths and religions all over the world” (Hopcke 14). From the repeated archetypal images,
symbols and figures, Jung asserted the existence of the archetypes and had listed a few of them: anima/ animus, the Divine Child, the Great Mother, the Wise Old Man, the Trickster, etc..

There is a difference between the content of the archetype—it is called as the archetypal image or figure, and the archetype itself. The archetype is “like a psychic mold into which individual and collective experiences are poured and where they take shape” (Hopcke 15), and it is the synonym of Plato’s form, or eidos—it is “irrepresentable” (Walker 13). On the other hand, the content of the archetype (the archetypal image or figure) can be represented as a series of images or symbols or figures. For example, “the Great Mother” is an archetype and the figure of Virgin Mary can be one of its archetypal images; the Warrior is an archetype and Athena is one of its archetypal figures; the Martyr is an archetype and the figures of Christ and Andromeda are two of its archetypal figures. Therefore, the archetype is the innate conception within the human nature such as the conception of the Great Mother, the Martyr and the Warrior; and the content of the archetype can be presented in various ways with more specific details. Despite such distinctions between archetypes and the contents of archetypes, “Jungians, and Jung himself, frequently and misleadingly use the term ‘archetype’ when they actually mean ‘archetypal image’” (Walker 12) The difference between them can only be told by the contexts.

In the essay “The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious” Jung had pointed out that “the archetypes…have crystallized out in the course of time. They are the ruling powers, the gods, images of the dominant laws and principles, and of typical, regularly occurring events in the soul’s cycle of experience.” (Two Essays on
Analytical Psychology 93) The word “crystallized” used by Jung can be read as “condensed” or “distilled” and the archetypes are condensed conceptions of a particular aspect in human nature; and the words “ruling and dominant” refer not to an external power but to an irresistible energy that is internal in humanity. “The archetypes, as inherited structures, belong to the collective unconscious of the human race and may be said to constitute the images as well as the essential laws of human nature and humanity has slowly evolved over the ages.” (Walker 10) The influence of the archetypes is innate and the way the archetypes show their influence and the way human beings comprehend their influence is by the images or symbols.

Each archetype contains a numbers of symbols, images or figures, however, these images or symbols would never reveal a static nature for the archetype; instead, what they carry are the dynamic and even contradictory emotions and meanings. Jung has mentioned that ”Archetypes are complexes of experience that come upon us like fate, and their effects are felt in our most personal life” (Jung, Archetypes and the Collected Unconscious 62). The word “complexes” shows not only the structures of the archetypes but also how archetypes arouse the emotions. Since Jung defined a complex as “a collection of associated ideas and images all linked together by a common affect” (Stevens 65), the archetypes release their emotional affects through numerous symbols or images. Jung’s student, Erich Neumann, has the similar view, claiming that “The structure of the archetype is the complex network of psychic organization, which includes dynamism, symbolism, and sense content, and whose

4 “Although the term has indeed acquired connotations of pathology, Jung has no such connotations in mind when he proposed it. While complexes could be pathological and contribute to neurotic suffering, Jung regarded them as normally healthy components of the psyche” (Stevens 65).
center and intangible unifier is the archetype itself” (4). Being potentially positive and negative, complexes can be unconscious due to the repression or the incomprehension of their related affects, but sometimes they can be brought into consciousness. For example, a man/ a woman can form his/ her mother complex like this: within his/ her psyche there are particular images that are related to his/ her mother, the preexisting archetypes of “mother”—the Great Mother or the Negative Mother, will “magnify, distort, or modify both the feeling tone and the representational aspect of the mother” (Hopcke 19). “The feeling tone and the representational aspect of mother” are the images of mother, and since the images are connected with the archetypes, the immense power accumulated in agelessness in the archetypes will be installed in those images; and as the result, a mother complex is formed.

“The dynamic, the effect of the archetype… appears, for example, in positive and negative emotions, in fascinations and projections, and also in anxiety, in manic and depressive states, and in the feeling that the ego is being overpowered” (Neumann 3). A complex can be overpowering for a person’s ego if a person’s ego is too close to the archetypes and is trapped in them. The danger of being trapped in a complex is what Woodman says about the addiction to perfection, “which psychologically indicates enslavement by a complex” (Addiction to Perfection 52), warning that “To move toward perfection is to move out of life, or what is worse, never to enter it” (52). Paradoxically, getting too close to the influence of the archetypes that are innate within human nature will lead a person far from having a healthy psyche. The fact indicates that the influence of the archetypes is not the only power the human psyche should follow; on the contrary, there is another opposite strength in operation to
(III) The ego and the archetypes

The strength that is in contrast to the archetypes is that of the ego, which is much more personal and fragile when it is compared to the archetypes; but the integrity of human nature is held in the balanced interaction between the ego and the archetypes. Before we discuss the interaction between a person’s ego and archetypes, it is necessary to talk about Jung’s conception of ego. The ego—Jung sometimes used other terms such as “the self” or “ego consciousness” (Hopcke 77) to indicate the same thing, means the self-awareness and the viewpoint one has about oneself. It is the ego that makes a human being an individual and it is the ego that makes a human being have an identity and recognize himself/herself as “I”. Unlike Sigmund Freud, who treated the ego as a psychic structure that mediates the superego (the demands of society) and the id (the drives of the instinct), Jung viewed the ego as a complex, which involves the conscious and the unconscious emotions toward the viewpoint about oneself. Although Jung admitted that the ego is the most essential part in the development of the psyche, he pointed out at the same time that the ego is very fragile compared to the ageless archetypes in the collective unconscious.

The relationship between the ego and the archetypes should be held in balance. If the ego loses contact with the archetypes, the ego will feel that there is no meaning in life—“a meaninglessness, perhaps depression, the sense of being adrift, without direction or hope—feelings that seem so frequently to characterize contemporary lives” (Hopcke 78). “One reason people are suffering today to an almost intolerable
degree is that their unmeditated suffering has no conscious connection with its archetypal ground” (Woodman, *Addiction to Perfection* 134). The meaning of life is very important for a healthy psyche and the meaning can be searched through the archetypal symbols, figures or images. “The symbolic life in some form is a prerequisite for psychic health. Without it the ego is alienated from its suprapersonal source and falls victim to a kind of cosmic anxiety” (Edinger 117). Conversely, if the ego is too close to the archetypes, it will encounter a great danger called “inflation”—“a sense of exhibitionistic grandiosity, an unrealistic view of oneself as omnipotent, omniscient, unassailable” (Hopcke 78). Over-identifying with the power of an archetype or an archetype itself, the ego will fantasize that it has the power belonging to that archetype.

About the problem of inflation, there are different opinions. Hopcke considers that inflation will result in “the egomaniac and the egotist” (78); but Woodman’s concern about inflation is more than that. What Woodman calls the danger of the addiction to perfection is indeed the problem of the inflation, and it is a problematic situation that will lead to self-destruction, for “the ego, caught in a massive inflation, is denying the inner Reality⁵” (*Addiction to Perfection* 188). According to the observations Woodman has about her analysands, what such inflation causes is more than the tendency of egocentrism. Many pathological symptoms, such as eating disorders, alcoholism, addictions to certain images projected by institutions, media or society, are caused by the inflated ego. A woman’s “identification with beauty,

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⁵ What Woodman means by “inner Reality” is the very natural state of a person’s ego, which has its own authority inside, being comfortable and confident with itself, and needs nothing to addict to (*Addiction to Perfection* 188).
goddess, and light led to unbearable confrontations with reality, and further binging and depressions…Nature worked in direct compensation: the more inflated her fantasies, the blacker her Darkness” (The Owl Was a Baker’s Daughter 73). With these identifications, or we should call “addictions”, our natural states of humanity, our inner Realities, are locked; instead, we are allowing ourselves to be contaminated by alien elements that are beyond proper humanity (Addiction to Perfection 188).

Edward F. Edinger’s opinion about inflation differs according to phases of life. He makes clear between “the original inflation” and “the negative inflation”. “The original inflation” means the common phenomenon of earliest infancy—“We are born in a state of inflation. In earliest infancy, no ego or consciousness exists. All is in the unconscious. The latent ego is in complete identification with the Self” (7). The capitalized “Self” is an archetype, which can be embodied in the images such as: the paradisiacal past of unbroken unity symbolized by the Garden of Eden or the Golden Age of Olympus; the mythological World Egg from which all creation is said to have sprung; the hermaphroditic Original Man, or anthropos, who represents humanity before its fall and degradation, […]. (Hopcke 95)

From this description, we can see that the Self refers to the state of union with the deity of nature, where binary oppositions such as male and female, natural and cultural, self and other, do not exist, but do exist “wholeness, totality, the union of

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6 The capitalized “Self” is an archetype while the uncapsulized “self” is the individual ego. “While the editors of the Collected Works do not capitalize self, whether referring to the archetype or simply to one’s individual ego—leaving it to the context of the passage to indicate which meaning was intended” (Hopcke 95).
opposites, the central generative point, the world navel, the axis of the universe, the
creative point where God and man meet” (Edinger 4). The Self indicates that there is
no distinction between oneself and one’s surroundings but experiences that one is
one’s surroundings—one is the universe. In the phase of infancy, it is ordinary for
children to indulge themselves in such inflation, experiencing that they are “the center
of the universe” (Edinger 12). Pearson substitutes the Self with the term of “the
Innocent”7 to explain the same notion, claiming that “Innocence is a natural state for
children”8 (26).

However, when children grow up, starting to experience that the world does not
always satisfy their needs, “the original inflation begins to dissolve, being untenable
in the face of experience” (Edinger 12)—this is how alienation begins. “Repeatedly
experiences of alienation continues progressively right into adult life” (Edinger 12).
Nevertheless, if adults carry this inflated attitude continually, they will be trapped in a
problematic situation such as delusion or paranoia, which Edinger calls “negative

7 What Pearson means by the archetype of the Innocent is actually identical to the Self. Comparing the
archetype of the Self and that of the Innocent, it is clear that they indicate the same thing. Pearson
depicts the archetype of the Innocent in the following paragraph: “The Innocent lives in an unfallen
world, a green Eden where life is sweet and all one’s needs are met in an atmosphere of care and love.
[…] The closest ordinary equivalents to this experience occur in early childhood […] in mystic
experiments of Oneness with the cosmos” (25). Pearson’s depiction of “an unfallen world of Eden” and
“Oneeness with cosmos” corresponds with Hopcke’s and Edinger’s descriptions of the state of the Self:
the union with God and the world before degradation.
8 Compared with Lacan’s conception of “the imaginary”, the notion of the Self or the Innocent will be
made more clear. The conception of the imaginary is identical with that of the Self. “This ‘imaginary’ is
a state in which there is no clear distinction between subject and object: no central self exists to set
object apart from subject” (Selden 163). Therefore, the imaginary is a correspondent state with that of
the Self where there is no distinction between one and one’s surroundings nor between any binary
oppositions such as males and females, nature and culture.
inflation”.

The symptoms come along with what Edinger means by “negative inflation” are identical with Woodman’s observation on inflation that “the ego, caught in a massive inflation is denying the inner Reality” (Addiction to Perfection 188). Edinger writes:

“There is also negative inflation. This can be described as identification with the divine victim—an excessive, unbounded sense of guilt and suffering. [...] In fact taking on oneself too much of anything is indicative of inflation because it transcends proper human limits. Too much humility as well as too much arrogance, too much love and altruism as well as too much power striving and selfishness, are all symptoms of inflation” (15).

Although Edinger’s focus is on the inflation of the ego’s over-identification with the Self, the above depictions reveal the fact that the problem of inflation does not only refer to the Self-over-identified situation. The Self indicates an innocent attitude and naïve belief toward the union between oneself and the universe, but Edinger’s mentions about the symptoms such as too much humility, arrogance, love and altruism are more than the archetype of the Self. The problem of inflation does not always occur in the Self-related situation, it can relate to other archetypes too.

Over-identification with other archetypes can result in the same problem and draw people away from the state of healthy psyche.

(IV) The Warrior/ Athena vs. the Martyr/ Andromeda
In the beginning of the chapter, the negative view Woodman and Pearson have toward the over-identification with an archetype has been mentioned. The Warrior/Athena and the Martyr/Andromeda are the most influential archetypes/archetypal figures under the effect of patriarchal society. Men/women who identify themselves with these two archetypes might have been agreeing with patriarchal culture, however, cultural agreement cannot solve the problem of inflation that might be shown through a series of psychic symptoms.

Nevertheless, as we examine the power belonging to the archetypes of the Warrior and the Martyr, we find them necessary in our life. Embodied in the heroes who defend the world against dragons or villains and bring a new order, The Warrior tells us that people can influence the world by the courage to fight for themselves. By the behaviors of defending, the Warrior helps us to claim our rights and to build our identities in the world. Pearson writes about the positive energy of the Warrior on the physical, psychological, intellectual and spiritual levels:

On the physical level, the Warrior archetype presides over the assertion that we have a right to be alive. The Warrior consciousness includes self-defense, a willingness and an ability to fight to defend oneself. On the psychological level, it has to do with the creation of healthy boundaries, so we know where we end and other people begin, and an ability to assert ourselves.

Intellectually, the Warrior helps us learn discrimination, to see what path, what ideas, what values are more useful and life-enhancing than others. On the spiritual level, it means learning to differentiate among
Woodman also claims that “Positive masculine energy is goal-oriented and has the strength of purpose to move toward that goal. It disciplines itself to make the most of its gifts—physical, intellectual, spiritual—attempting to bring them into harmony” (Woodman, Addiction to Perfection 15). The positive energy of the Warrior is not only associated with self-awareness: awareness of who we are, awareness of what we want, and awareness of where we are, but also with the ability to accomplish what we choose. With the energy, we can not only be confident with our identities and our rights, but also our capabilities to create or to slay, and our judgments upon the world. The archetype of the Warrior carries the message that the warrioring, the positive masculine energy, can change the environment into a better world that is more conformed to the value-judgment of the Warriors.

However, the negative complex within the archetype of the Warrior is the fear of losing the battle, for winning is the only way to achieve the goal and to build the ideal world. Worried about failure, “Warriors must be tough-minded and realistic in order to change the world by slaying dragons. […] Warriors also have to be on the lookout for inappropriate qualities within themselves to be slain or repressed” (Pearson 79-80). Just like the way Woodman interprets the interaction between Athena, one of the archetypal figures of the Warrior, and Medusa, what it means by Medusa is not only the physical Medusa but also a metaphor for all the inappropriate things both within and without herself by her value-judgment. And as it has been mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, “repressing Medusa” can only result in an
unhappy Athena. “Warriors become burned out because they live life as a struggle against others and against parts of themselves they see as unworthy, […] the struggle to be one up ultimately was killing them—their souls and their heart, and sometimes also their bodies” (Pearson 95).

While the Warrior considers the slaying others to protect oneself necessary, the Martyr affirms the importance of sacrificing for others. “The basic plot of the martyr archetype is enacted in ancient rituals of sacrifice in fertility religions. […] Basic to every fertility religion is the knowledge that death and sacrifice are prerequisite to rebirth. This is a basic law of the natural and the spiritual worlds” (Pearson 98). In imitating the circle of nature, the Martyr abandons the earthly identity and joins the pattern of greater world—the world of deity. Therefore, what the Martyr is concerned about is not development of selfness but that of what is beyond selfness—the surrounding, the relationship with other people, even the relationship with the universe. The Martyr recognizes that “I am not the only person in the world” (99) and realizes that there are always more important things to do than caring only about oneself.

The positive energy of the Martyr is that “The decision to care, even at the cost of self-sacrifice, is a choice here for life and against despair” (103). The great power of self-sacrifice is love and the affirmation of life; however, the negative power of the Martyr might be completely opposite to it. Pearson writes about the fact that the self-sacrifice of life or pleasure might be derived from the fear of experiencing life and facing humanity:

“Behind much of asceticism is a superstitious belief that if we do not
really live this life, we will not have to die. Beauty, sensuality, passion, all are suspect because they seduce us from focusing on the timeless beauty of God by enamoring us with earthly beauty. Ascetics and all the rest of us who have fears about fully experiencing life, then, fail to receive it and hold ourselves apart from its blessings. Deep in the human psyche is the fear that we will pay dearly for our pleasures” (109-110).

As sacrifice becomes an exchanging agency between the earthly life and the favor of God, sacrifice loses its contact with humanity; in contrast, it reveals its inner despair toward life itself. Therefore, the negative sacrifice cannot be a real sacrifice, it is an escape instead, for what lies beneath the behavior of giving away life is the fear toward it.

Pearson also warns about the danger of using sacrifice as a way of earning respect or feeling superior to others. “Healthy giving is respectful of both the giver and the receiver. […] If they use giving to feel superior, then they really are masking their own sense of inadequacy, something that must be attended to” (106). Using sacrifice as a way of earning something to satisfy oneself, Martyrs will not give properly; instead, they just keep themselves in the position of giving, forgetting what they have given and whom they have given it to. In this condition, sacrifice becomes a mere posture, having nothing concerned with love and relationship.

(V)Archetypes vs. Stereotypes

In discussing archetypes, we will find that archetypes do share something with stereotypes. The Warrior shares something in common with the male stereotype that is
strong, dominating, and adventurous; while the Martyr resembles the female stereotype that is selfless and devoting in certain aspects. Examining the relationship and the difference between archetypes and stereotypes, Pearson writes: “The stereotypes are laundered, domesticated versions of the archetypes from which they derive power. The shallow stereotype seems controllable and safe, but it brings then less, not more, life. The archetype behind it is full of life and power” (Pearson xix-xx). Stereotypes come from powerful archetypes, but stereotypes have been over-simplified to fit the social roles of both genders. As Susan A. Basow observes the development of gender stereotypes, writing that “Stereotypes are strongly held overgeneralizations about people in some designated social category” (3), she finds out that although gender stereotypes could differ from societies to societies and change from time to time, gender stereotypes still cannot fully reflect the nature of humanity, but reflect the social need to keep people in categories in certain society. From this point, we can see the difference between archetypes and stereotypes is that stereotypes are reflecting the attitude of a certain society toward genders and limited by it while archetypes are revealing every aspects of human nature; the gender stereotypes in a certain society can be seen as one of numerous images or figures of an archetype. Archetypes are beyond the over-simplified and socialized stereotypes, revealing the depth and the complexity of humanity.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the characters in The Blind Assassin according to the difference between archetypes and stereotypes. Many critics have argued that the characters of the novel are quite stereotypical and Atwood means to lay bare the gender stereotypes in order to criticize them. However, while Atwood
presents the story through multiple narratives, its characters show their multiple aspects as these narratives reflect and explain each other. The multiple aspects of their personalities go beyond the issues of over-simplified stereotypes and link the characters with mythological figures and the archetypes behind them.