

Divergent Mother: A Force Calling Out For Restoration & Healing

[BY AMANDA FIORINO](#)

“To describe my mother would be to write about a hurricane in its perfect power. Or the climbing, falling colors of a rainbow.” ~ Maya Angelou

“Without a mother, one cannot live...without a mother, one cannot die.” ~ Herman Hesse, Narcissus and Goldmund

Motherhood. Mother. Mater. Matter. I sift through these words daily as the task of caring for another human being, my own child, is continually renewed with every moment.

Mothering is a relational vortex of paradox. A labyrinth filled with unknown corners and bends that can leave one feeling lost and confused. There is no one way in the spiraling offshoots of tending and loving another being solely reliant upon you. Books, articles, mythologies, cosmology, scholarly journals, movies, documentaries, studies, poetry – these are all ways in which humans have wandered through the terrain of “mother,” trying to understand its effect upon our lives and force majeure.

There is something mysterious and mammoth about this “role” which, to me, is more a way of being in the world. *Role* is suggestive of a task that one can put down whenever they like, as if it were a hat that you set on a hook with the option of going a week or longer without putting it back on. The word “role” invokes the imagery of a stage where a play is being acted out.

The trouble with this imagery and word arises out of the

recognition that motherhood is ecologically emergent, and therefore never static or prewritten. Filled with twists and turns, knots and ruts, heartbreak and betrayals, abandonment and abuse, cosmic love and feisty resilience, unimaginable decisions and insane confusion, shame and guilt, loss and lunacy – motherhood does not and cannot be one way.

And it is my belief that Mother, as a larger archetypal and energetic force, is calling out for restoration and healing.

You might ask yourself what associations come to mind when you think of or hear the word “mother”? In our culture of binaries and gender-based oppression, it is quite common to assume that “mother” is indicative of someone who identifies as female, as a woman, as heterosexual, as human, as either good or bad, and as monogamous.

Additionally, it is a common assumption that to be a mother means you carried another being in your womb and birthed them from your own body. Rather narrow and limiting, don't you think? Not to mention oppressive and violent.

If you're puzzled by how ideological assumptions that are quite systemic could be oppressive and violent, you might consider the psychological, spiritual, physical, and emotional impact suffered by those who do not fit into the narrow parameters of our dominant cultural conceptions of relationship, family, gender, and love. Parameters that invalidate and attempt to erase divergent ways of being in the world. Queer non-binary mothers, adoptive mothers, more-than-human mothers, trans women mothers, auxiliary mothers, interspecies mothers, lesbian mothers, to offer a few examples.

I bring this matter up before continuing in the hopes of widening the narrative. Mother is far larger than the small and static definitions and associations it has been wrapped in. Mother is immense, and has the ability to break the

constricted and unimaginative walls of an industrialized, cultural complex. A complex that encompasses various threads within the sickly tapestry of our western world. Those threads being cisgender heteropatriarchy, colonization, religious institutions, militarization, speciesism, ecocide, capitalism, and human-centrism.

Mother is the invisible stitching that has held the world together thus far even amidst all the falling apart.

Mother is also a part of the dismembering of contracted paradigms attempting to crush divergent evolutions of this extraordinary existence. And though patriarchy has tried its damndest over the last five thousand years to obliterate the dynamic power of Mother, we still see Mother growing through cracks in the pavement and rising up along the edges of buildings.

Revelatory by nature, motherhood has an unforgiving way of carrying over generational and ancestral residues in the form of trauma, wounds, wisdom, and traditions. These residues all seem to have a common thread running through them that may appear both alluring and repulsive – belonging.

Why might it be both alluring and repulsive? Simply put, to be mothered is to be guided by love, whether that love is generative and stitched together well or fragmented, degenerative, and coming apart at the seams. It is fully possible to both know that the one(s) who mothered us did the best they could, and that their best left marks of particularity.

Belonging, then, becomes either a knowing of one's place or more commonly, an experience of longing. A longing that presents as a deep ache, and manifests in endless

psychosomatic expressions. A belonging that, in our modern day, has launched many into a journey through the archetype of Orphan. For not only do we feel the separation from our human mothers, we feel, whether consciously or unconsciously, the separation from our Earth Mother. The medicine, then, of Orphan is often an excruciating journey that, if undertaken mindfully and with the necessary psychospiritual resources (inter- and intra-personally), can bring us home to our deepest root of belonging.

To belong. To belong to place, space, and peoples. To belong to the concentric circling of our relational webwork. To know that the deep mythos of who we are is embraced, encouraged, and wanted. Whether we identify as human, creature, or monster, to belong means our clan knows there is a necessary and sacred space for us in the place of everything. This, of course, is assuming that we live in a healthy culture. To our great dismay, our western culture is deeply unhealthy.

This brings us deeper down the mother-hole to an idea that is not new, and yet is often forgotten: to be mothered by the world.

You might, at this point, make a distinction between little "m" mother and big "M" mother. Why, you might be wondering, is this important? Little "m" mother speaks to the one or two people who we consider(ed) our guardians or caregivers. The one or two people we quite naturally assume will love us perfectly.

What we come to find, over and over, is that no one human can love us perfectly for they themselves are human. Neither goddess nor god, they too have woundings, trauma, shadow, biases, and prejudices. Which brings us to our big "M" Mother. Mother is the archetypal force that is both of form and formlessness. It is the Orphic Egg. Mother courses through every cell within the cosmos, and finds us at different points along our journey of emerging and becoming – whether that be

in the form of a human or that of a river.

However, *Mother* and *mother* intersect, as if they were a double helix. For, to be mothered by the world is to include those that were and are our guardians and caregivers in adolescence.

This way of being, this archetypal force that is Mother seeks us out in our pain and joy, our living and our dying, but we have to open ourselves to all of our senses and imagination to truly be aware of its presence.

This also means we are likely to encounter all those woundings and traumas from our youthful adolescence where we felt the sting and ache of those ancestral and generational residues carried over by those who cared for us. They await composting, metabolizing, and alchemizing.

To be born of this world means to be born of a mother. To be carried and held by a mother – whether human or more-than-human. For we are born many times over in this life. Born from threshold crossings that can present in the form of wounds, traumas, deaths, loves, relationships, dreams, ecological places, deep imaginings, and more. At any given moment we are being mothered, mothering another, or mothering ourselves. This begs the question, is mothering something innate, something cultivated, or a bit of both? I don't dare pretend to have an answer as it would seem the answer would be different for each of us.

To mother, in our day and age, is a radical act that spills over into the other streams of existence. To mother is a practice of being firm and fierce while remaining tender and available.

In my own experiences thus far of being mother to a tiny human, the great mirror of relationship is held before me daily through his presence and gaze, and I am reminded of all the ways I still have yet to grow. All the ways those ancestral and generational residues seek reconciliation and healing. For it is my hope that I might, in my generation, be an Elder – one with a particular maturity who's stories, insights, and wisdom can be shared as salve, and steady others for the path ahead.

I hope to be one who can show others the trails they can follow for more ease in navigating the ever-shifting labyrinthine forest of Mother. An elder who knows of the fears creeping along the edge of dancing shadows cast by firelight. An elder who knows that the way in is through.

Mother is a ballad with no end, a dance of endless steps, a song made of otherworldly notes, a dynamic and rushing river. There is a mother for everything!

There is a mother within every being ready and willing for all the moments where patience, ferocity, and love are being invoked.

To mother and be mothered is to re-member a deep thread of who we are. And it is to remember that we belong here, on this land in this place, to our great Mother, the Earth.

Photo by [Julie Johnson](#) on [Unsplash](#)

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [The Desire Map: A Guide to Creating Goals with Soul](#) .

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Sensuous Presence: Giving Yourself Over To The

Earth

*Forging Your Own Path – To The One Inside The
Wound & Burning With Fever*

*Exhale: Surrender To Shadow Goddesses & Dwell In
Places Of Discomfort*

Earth, isn't this what you want?
To arise in us, invisible?
Is it not your dream, to enter us so wholly
there's nothing left outside us to see?
What, if not transformation,
is your deepest purpose? Earth, my love,
I want it too. Believe me,
no more of your springtimes are needed
to win me over—even one flower
is more than enough. Before I was named
I belonged to you. I see no other law
but yours, and know I can trust
the death you will bring.

See, I live. On what?
Childhood and future are equally present.
Sheer abundance of being
floods my heart.

RAINER MARIA RILKE

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