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AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRIPLE GODDESS:
IMAGES OF PERSEPHONE, KALI, AND NEPHTHYS

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An Analysis of the Triple Goddess:
Persephone, Kali, and Nephthys

Kimberly Holladay

How are the women of ancient religions portrayed? Are the women of religion typical, everyday women or celebrated queens wrapped in gold? The truth is that no single image exists that can be pointed to as the iconic goddess. The idea of a female deity can be startling to those who practice in Abrahamic religions but the appearance of such a character has a role, if not a lead, in many world religions and myths. These goddesses act as role models and guides for many people, especially female worshippers. After the female deity is acknowledged and accepted as an integral part of myth and religion, the scholar then has to identify Her role in context of the religion's culture as well as the myths that surround the goddess. Many religions have cults or factions that celebrate one goddess from a group of many and that goddess stands for something important to her followers even though the goddess does not encompass every part of life. The three stages, or typical groups, of the goddess represent the roles that the woman will play throughout her lifetime (Scott & McClure 113) as daughter, mother, and widow. The most popular view of this is the archetype of the triple goddess, featuring the Maiden, Mother, and Crone. While traditionally, these three manifestations of the Goddess occupy very different places in the life cycle, some goddesses defy their traditional category and tend to share characteristics of all of the categories. Goddesses are able to cross many class and social status lines. These goddesses are able to relate to those at the top of society as well as those on the fringe of the society. The maiden Persephone, the mother Kali, and the crone Nephthys all are the rulers of their domain, the Underworld, as well as being a representation of their archetypal roles by completing many of the tasks associated with their title. This can be true for each of the goddesses discussed in this paper. Persephone was the sweet maiden while taking on the role as

Queen of the Underworld. Kali is the mother of her people as well as the representation of everything dark and gory. Finally Nephthys is a woman who wants to be a mother while also being the friend to the dead and grieving. While this setting is apropos for the Crone Nephthys, it doesn't seem as fitting for the maiden or the mother. In the following work, the ideas of Maiden, Mother, and Crone will be explored and then placed into the context of three world religions. After each Goddess manifestation has been explored, their placement within the setting of the Underworld and how this is fitting to their character will also be explored.

The theory of the Triple Goddess will give structure to the myths of ancient religions. The basic character types that are represented in the theory of the Triple Goddess are the Maiden, who is the young and beautiful woman, the Mother, the start of life and the nurturer of the society, and the Crone, the old yet wise woman. The roles of maiden, mother, and crone given to goddesses are closely associated with the roles women play in a patriarchal society. Because of this kind of categorization some scholars, like Marija Gimbutas, have suggested that female deities should be labeled based on their relationship to the life stages of life, regeneration, and death (Scott & McClure 114).

The triple goddess also has a literary function. To be able to place goddesses in a kind of character role, they become easier to deal with and identify their traits. With a preset group of traits, a myth can be more neatly analyzed and deeper meaning may be found when considering each goddess. In many myths, some characters and their personality traits are taken on face value. However, some goddesses represent the creation of life or a sense of responsibility. It is in the analysis of the character as a

maiden, mother, or crone that deeper meaning can be found. Many myths have come together to create the iconic image of what the goddess stands for. It is these images that give the reader or scholar a snapshot of what the goddess should be. Because of the changes and merging of many ancient myths, some scholars feel that the three goddesses may actually be one goddess portrayed very differently depending on her age and function to society. Some myths, like that of Persephone, have also possibly been merged with other myths to make her seem to fit into one of the triple goddess categories. Persephone might have merged with the idea of Kore to create one myth about the archetypal maiden.

In many analyses of myths, it is the roles that the deities play as well as the actions that they do allows the deity to be categorized. The triple goddess allows scholars to develop a schema to think about a goddess' actions towards others as well as her functions in society. It is these roles that allow the Goddess to have a neat and tidy place within society and its rules. While it is nice to have these divisions in roles and functions a clear distinction cannot always be made. In this paper I will argue that no goddess has just the characteristics of their specific category and therefore cannot just be placed into one group of goddesses.

Maiden, Mother, Crone: Three Goddesses in their Roles

The maiden is the earliest stage of a woman's life and can be compared to the puberty stage of mortal women. These goddesses are young, alluring, sweet, and virgins. These girls or women are normally associated with white or pale colors and tied to beginnings of new events and new things. Women and girls classified as maidens are seen as "untouched by life" (Shinoda 165), going through life as if they are floating

above the dirt, grime, and responsibilities of everyday life. Maidens don't have jobs and don't have children and because of this, they don't have many responsibilities. Most maidens are pictured playing in the flowers or just roaming the countryside. These young goddesses are usually also the signs of regeneration, a term used by Gimbutas, and renewal and are usually associated with the spring season and Vernal equinox.

These women are also seen as "unawakened sexually" or as virgins. Some researchers argue that the term virgin may not always refer to the sexuality of the girl but is just a patriarchal term referring to a young woman (Conway 22). However, it seems that when addressing myths like that of Persephone, virgin may be in reference to both her sexuality and her position in society. This is because the rape by Hades is an important part of many translations of her myth.

The maiden is the girl is open to whatever life has in store for her and just allowing life to happen to her (Conway 50). With this comes the ability to be who she wants to be for herself. The maiden has moved out on her own and has not quite moved to her next stage of life. In this way, she still generally has a family structure that she is a part of but may not necessarily be living with. She is still looking for her place and must look to authority figures for guidance and some pushing in the right way. However, she is not usually inclined to use authority figures as her first source of information. She purely exists for her self. To sum up the placement of this mythological character in society, the words "free" and "spirited" could be terms to describe her views on life and responsibility as well as how the rest of the world sees her. She is able to try on new identities, to see what she likes and what she doesn't. The clearest image of what the

goddess truly represents is suggested by D. J. Conway when he says to think of life as a labyrinth and the Goddess as the girl teasing as she pulls us further in.

The next stage of the both the woman and the goddess is that of motherhood.

This is the easiest to identify and relate to for many women today. This goddess is the most tied to responsibility towards her family and community because of her obvious dependents. This is also true for mothers in society. Mothers are the most involved with both their children and their surroundings. In many myths, most fathers are there at creation but tend not to be present for the woes and problems of the child's life. This is true for cultures like the Greek where in myth, Zeus seemed to be most people's father but it is the mothers that take most of the responsibility for the upbringing of children. The mothers are the ones who teach their children about the world, about the rules of society, and about life in general. Most cultures have a woman who represents a Mother Earth or mother of the people and this goddess is generally the source of life, the nurturer of society, and the sustainer of the culture. Most polytheistic cultures support a creation myth that has both a male and female deity involved in creation as well many cultures that support just a female creator. Because of the mother's direct ability to carry and have children, it is the Mother Goddess who is most likely to be linked to myths and stories about creation. An example of this is the creation myth "Out of the Blue" from the Iroquois tradition. In this myth, one woman is responsible for creating the world from very few elements and all of the people within it. The Sky Woman was able to create and nurture several generations as was done by the woman of her family for generations. (Scott 68) This creator image also exists in ancient Greece where Gaia was Mother Earth and creator of all things. Being the creator of such important and usually

fragile things causes the mother to be very involved in the entire process that her creation will go through.

Along with being involved in the child or creations life, most mother Goddesses also have a protective streak, much like many mortal mothers, to keep safe what is closest to them. Mother's like Kali will go to great lengths, including killing, to protect that which cannot protect itself. This mother also has guidelines for her children, demanding the best of them and for them. In Maiden, Mother, Crone, the mother is said not to want her children to be deprived or abuse themselves (Conway 46). Mothers want their children to have safe and advantageous relationships with others as well as respecting themselves. Because of this aspect of the mother, she is generally looking out for them, hoping for the best and guiding them the best that she can through the tough roads in life.

The color that represents this stage of life is usually red, as some scholars would say that this is the stage of life is the closest representation of love, both intimate and familial. Red is also the color of blood, which is the one thing that can be the strongest symbol of life itself. The item associated most with the mother goddess is the boiling cauldron (Conway 45) which can be seen as a kind of womb, a place of creation and re-forming.

The third phase of the Goddess is the Crone. This Goddess can be related to the postmenopausal part of a woman's life. The crone represents two times in the cycle, both the time in which women are aged and wise or the Crone can represent the actual threshold and passing into death at the end of life. The physical description of this goddess is usually that of an old, decrepit woman. This goddess isn't the kind of person

that can be related to the nice old Grandmother at the end of the street but the old widow who lives in the haunted house at the edge of the woods.

The color black, which is the absence of all colors, symbolizes this woman and this is usually the color of her shroud. She is associated with the Fall season because that is the time of the seasonal cycle when everything is withering and dying. The crone is also associated with the Halloween holiday as well as November 1st, which is the day of the dead in many cultures. These older goddesses are tied to the earthly event of death and dying as well as labeled as the guides or guardians of the souls of the recently deceased. Some of these Goddesses are actual queens of the Underworld while other goddesses of death are simply escorts to the underworld, like the Egyptian Goddess Nephthys who would trail the coffins and wail and mourn for the deceased.

As the ultimate teacher, it is the crone who can teach the mortal everything that has been feared and avoided throughout life. The crone is generally the holder of the secrets about the afterlife and many other ultimate truths. In religions that believe in reincarnation the Crone is the Goddess who will guide the mortal through this transition and help them be reborn. In religions that believe in an afterlife, it is the Crone who will guide the mortal there and make sure that all questions are answered about what happens after death. According to Jung, the crone is the dark side of us, the piece of ourselves that we hide from everyday thought. Most people avoid the topic of death. It is either seen as taboo to talk about it or it is just too scary to talk about the unknown out loud to other people. The Crone is hard to embrace because she is everything that is feared in society, she is the dark, the disheveled, the hag, and the woman who hides in wait for us in the shadows.

Maidens are the typical girl that has existed from the beginning of time until now. She is the girl who is unsure of her path but very sure of herself. Persephone is a myth that comes from Greece. Her story is unique because she is able to play her role as the maiden but, because of unforeseen circumstances, she must leave parts of her maidenhood behind to become a woman sooner than she thought. Because of the unexpected, a fairly messy transition, however, Persephone never seems able to shed all of her maiden qualities when she becomes the Queen of the Underworld.

Persephone: Iconic Maiden

The story of Persephone is most clearly laid out in the myth of her mother, Demeter. Persephone is the young woman who is characterized by her beauty and whimsical qualities. Most maidens are no longer living in their familial homes but they have moved on but definitely have not separated from their families. Maidens are tied to a father but this is not the case with Persephone. She does ultimately have a strong tie with an authority figure but it just happens to be her mother and not a father. Her tie to Demeter is seen in most myths as well as many temples in Greece. Persephone is sometimes seen as the younger version of her mother. They are tied together because in Greek myth, they are part of a triad as well, Persephone being the maiden, Demeter the mother, and Hecate the crone.

Persephone's image seems very close to girls in our society who are just leaving high school and starting college who have no idea what they will do with their lives. Persephone is the girl with no long-term goals, she takes the time to stop and smell the

roses or perhaps the Narcissus, which eventually gets her into trouble. Persephone's real story starts when she becomes the maiden in distress. When out picking flowers and enjoying the day with other maidens, Hades, the King of the Underworld, snatched her up and stole her away from the world and her mother to take her as his bride. Being a young girl, Persephone was sad and frightened to be away from her mother and what she knew. She was all alone in a new place with no one to turn to for comfort. After some time in the Underworld, Persephone had resigned herself to staying there.

After much pleading by Demeter to many of the other immortals, Persephone was able to leave the Underworld. However, being young and naïve, Persephone had eaten the seeds of the Pomegranate, the fruit of the Underworld that would tie her to the Underworld and her new husband Hades for the rest of time. However, the reunion with her mother each year would bring the spring and she would once again take on the daughter role but Persephone would never be able to fully be back in her maiden role. She is placed in society under someone else's authority but she still has the Underworld to rule and the knowledge that comes with that. Because of this, she has been transformed from the archetypal maiden to a woman who defies categorization.

Persephone: Maiden of the Underworld

How does Persephone maintain her maidenhood while spending time as a married woman in the Underworld? She is no longer a virgin, no longer unaware of her surroundings, and she is not wandering without a purpose for her life. She is a maiden because she retains the same personality and demeanor of the maiden while taking the responsibilities of a mature woman in a new set of surroundings. The western idea

conception of Hades or Hell has been translated to mean a place to torture the unfaithful thanks to authors like Dante and the images in *The Inferno*. However, in Greek myth the Underworld was more of a place to go after death. This was where souls went, good or bad, faithful or not. It isn't necessarily a bad place or a good place, just a place to go for souls. Therefore, Persephone did not have to be some scary figure that was present only to torture the lost souls. Her job was definitely not to scare people but to be at the gates to greet and welcome the newcomers to the Underworld. She is not a harsh queen or a withered hag but the "gracious and gentle queen of the dead" (Monaghan 241).

Persephone also has the ability to be a chameleon in her surroundings. Because she ate the seeds of the Pomegranate, Persephone was not allowed to completely return to her "normal" life. She was only able to return to her mother, Demeter, part of the year and had to spend the rest with her husband, Hades, in the Underworld. When she is in the Underworld with her husband Hades she is a wife and a safe guard to those entering the Underworld. When Persephone rejoins the world above, she regains a sense of her maidenhood. She is reunited with her mother and because of that she is incapable of escaping her role as daughter. With this ability she fits into the role of the archetypal maiden most of the time. When she is with her mother, she is the sweet young daughter but she can never fully recapture the maidenhood because she knows where her life will go when she is done there. And when she is in the Underworld, she is the Queen but she still continues to be sweet and innocent but she must handle all of the responsibilities that come with being a queen. While she has taken on a new role, she never moves to the motherhood stage. She never has children of her own and never provides that kind of

care to anyone. She is never fully the maiden but she will never move on to the mother or crone stages of life because of her dual life.

Mothers are the ones who love and comfort those close to them. As soon as the child is born, they feel that they have a responsibility that is now greater than themselves. Kali is a goddess who comes from the Hindu mythologies and has been classified as a mother. Kali, however, is not the typical mother. She doesn't look sweet and she isn't surrounded by her horde of children. She looks more fearsome and is a warrior on the battlefield. How can this Goddess possibly be mother to those who worship her in the Hindu religion?

Kali: Hindu Mother

At first glance, it would be easier to talk about how Kali couldn't possibly be classified as the mother of the Hindu religion. Upon closer inspection, there are many cases in which Kali is the strongest, most caring mother example. Depending on the temple in which Kali is celebrated, different images of her can be found. She perhaps is two goddesses in one, the mother as well as the punisher. Kali's name can actually be translated as "Black Mother" and she is the protector of Her people. The belief is that once Kali has been confronted and understood she becomes the very comforting and nurturing like a mother (Monaghan 165). David Kinsley makes a great case for Kali as mother when he explains the creative side of Kali. There are three basic truths in Hindu tradition of maya, prakrti, and sakti. Maya and Prakrti both are elements of the creative, or biological mother side, of Kali. Kali is dark and pushing out of the borders yet she

represents all possibilities for creation. Prakrti is the natural order. Kali is typically associated with chaos but she is the ruler of death and decay and therefore she controls that domain. The final aspect of this triad is sakti, which is power and might. This is where Kali's chaos power comes to mind. However, because she is the one who puts punishment into action, displaying her power and divine rule. Kali has taken the dark side and the dirty side of the mortal world and placed order within it and placed it within the rest of organized society. This is surely true when thinking about the Thugs and criminals. Kali is said to be the Patron Goddess of the lower Castes and those who break the laws of society. These groups of people have gained a sense of organization and order underneath the rule of Kali. She has created order and holds a responsibility to her worshippers. Kali allows the world to encompass all parts of the society into a cohesive vision that fits into the Hindu religion. She has created a place where everyone belongs, included the low castes, much like a mother would do.

She is also seen as a mother because of her overall power in Hinduism, particularly Tantrism. She is seen as the head of this faction, holding the secrets to the Ultimate truths and realities. Kali is able to help her followers to moksha, a release from the life cycle, as well as help them with their journeys through their life. Her four arms reveal the cycle of life and death (Kinsley 87). The images of Kali have been interpreted to be more than that of a scary woman, but of a woman full of knowledge of not only now, but the past and the future.

Kali: Dark Mother

The description and images of Kali that is displayed in most Hindu homes is not of a mother than any normal person would run to with open arms. First off, to find a mother you would have to look somewhere in the home, maybe the kitchen. To find Kali, her worshippers have to look for her on the battlegrounds or in the cemeteries. The picture of the iconic mother is someone soft, warm, and nurturing. The image of Kali is of a woman with messy hair, lots of blood, earrings of babies, jewelry of bones, and wielding several weapons next to decapitated heads in her hands. So far, Kali is not really the archetypal mother. The main way in which Kali departs from the archetype is the fact that she has no children of her own. Most mothers will give birth to some part of the world, give birth to an amazing number of children, or be the mother of an important person in the religion's mythology. Kali has no part in any of this. The closest that Kali is seen to children would be the babies that she wears as jewelry. The Hindu religion and Kali's followers see her as more of a mother because she is someone for them to embrace in the scary times of their lives. Her worshippers see her as the woman who is in charge of the scary things like death and destruction and so they can ask her and confront her about these things and be the most likely to get the answers that they need to be consoled and comforted. This is how Kali fits into the archetype as mother; she is the comforter but never the actual mother.

Another assumption that is generally made about mothers is that they have husbands who presumably would be the father of their children. In some versions of Kali's story, she does in fact have a husband but she is seen dancing on his lifeless body. Some would describe her as the second wife of Siva with Parvati as the first wife. Kali

never seems to be paired with Siva in a loving way so it is hard to picture them in any kind of parental setting. It is when Siva is with Kali that they cause trouble. In this way, Kali does not act as a devoted, submissive wife but as more of a playful and uncaring consort to Siva. Kali is the one person, or goddess who can encourage the dark and destructive side of Siva. Together they do a dance that threatens to send the world off balance. They are not a creating pair but rather a destroying pair.

Kali is also a warrior in her own right. Kali always seems to appear when others are having trouble fighting or expressing their own rage. The first appearance of Kali in Hindu myth is when she sprang from Durga's forehead in a time of rage. When she was created, she was already dressed for battle and wielded her weapons. Once she was on the battlefield, she immediately killed the two demons Durga was fighting by decapitating them in one swift move. She continues to function in this way for Durga as well as being the embodiment for rage for other Goddesses as well. This happens again when Kali is formed when Parvati is trying to become a dark, fierce goddess to kill Daruka. When she reforms herself, she becomes something like Kali. In this way, the Hindu myth is able to maintain Parvati's innocence by placing the rage and anger into the form of Kali. In this way, Kali will always be the dark and scary parts of Hindu myth to keep the anger contained so that it is categorized and easy to handle for believers.

Being the Dark Mother is only one of Kali's two sides. She seems to have this set of characteristics to encompass the dark and sometimes messy parts of Hindu myth. Generally, she is responsible for her own acts of rage and wrath; there are some times when other Goddesses seem to put on the mask of Kali to get their anger and actions across. Kali has also given context and meaning to those at the bottom of the Indian caste

system. She has placed meaning, importance, and religious tradition into their daily lives as well. While it may seem that Kali's darkness is merely there to play an opposite to Parvati, she is truly the organizer of the Hindu mythologies messier subjects.

The crone is the wise old woman who will greet the mortals at the end of their current life. It is this woman who holds the secrets to the afterlife and many other truths. The crone is the most feared because she is the least likely that people will identify themselves with. She is shrouded in darkness and in mystery. The story of Nephthys comes from the ancient myths of Egypt. While Nephthys has no cult of her own, she can be discussed as her role as twin to Isis and as funerary Goddess.

Nephthys: Archetypal Crone

Nephthys was one of the four goddesses that are featured on many funeral reliefs in the Egyptian religion. These four goddesses are associated with the embalming and mummification process. Nephthys is so tied to this process that the cloth used in mummification is sometimes known as "Nephthys' tresses" (Pinch 171). The other place that Nephthys can most likely be seen is trailing the funeral procession, being called the "Little Wailing Woman". (Bleeker) She is seen next to her twin sister in most cases as Isis is known as the "Big Wailing Woman" and is also one of the four funerary guardians.

The main myth that Nephthys plays a role in Egyptian religion is the death and resurrection of Osiris. In this myth, Nephthys is paired with her sister, Isis. Isis' husband, Osiris, was torn apart and killed by Nephthys' husband, Seth. After his death, the two sisters joined together to find the scattered pieces of Osiris so that Isis could put

him together again and conceive the child that they were fated to have. Nephthys functions as the dutiful and loyal sister to put him together. Throughout the process, Nephthys joined with her sister to mourn Osiris' death before Isis was able to breathe life back into him. Even though Isis was able to breathe life back into her husband, he was sent to judge souls in the Underworld. It is after this initial mourning period that Isis and Nephthys take on the roles of wailing women. It is also after this point that Nephthys is identified as a friend and guardian of the dead and grieving.

The role that Nephthys plays in Egyptian myth is that of a mourner. She is seen to many people as a friend of the dead as well as the grieving and can be turned to in the dark times near the end of life and during the grieving period for the family. She is featured as one of the guardians and is seen in many scenes about death. As Isis is seen as the generation of new things, Nephthys is placed in contrast to her as the darkness and death that must always be around the corner. Nephthys has taken on all of the responsibilities of the archetypal crone and is able to guide families through the time surrounding death.

Nephthys: Not so aged Crone

Nephthys does not seem to fit the visual image of crone at first glance. She is the guardian of the dead but she has an appearance about her that seems approachable. She has taken on the responsibilities of the crone but has the looks and many of the wants of a younger woman. Nephthys is not a main figure in Egyptian religion because she has not accumulated a following of her own. However, Nephthys was the daughter of Nut and

Geb and therefore had many powerful ties. She was the sister of Osiris and Isis and the sister and wife to Seth, the God of the desert. These relationships made her a prominent part of many myths and gave her a central role in the funerary ceremonies of ancient Egypt.

When considering most images of Crones, the ideas of small children and husbands never seem to come to mind. However, when thinking about Nephthys, she can be most recognized for the relationships that she had with other deities. She was the daughter of the Sky goddess and twin sister to Isis. When she married, she married her brother Seth, who was also associated with the death and the barren desert. However, because of his role in the Pantheon of Gods, Nephthys and Seth were not going to have any children together. This seems very fitting to the Crone role in the archetype. However, Nephthys wanted to have children and went out of her way to do so. She seduced the husband of her sister, Osiris, and she through this relationship she had Anubis. Because of Seth's rage and other problems with the baby, Nephthys was not able to keep the son and he was later found by Isis and he was adopted by her. So, despite her longings and her extreme tries to have a child of her own, Nephthys retained this crone like attribute but very unwillingly.

Because of Nephthys' relationship with the God of the Barren Desert, Seth, she is seen as barren herself, an "imitation woman" (Pinch 171). Giving birth to children is definitely a sign of motherhood and also the mark of womanhood in many societies. For Nephthys to be relegated to the fringe of society only furthers the stereotype that crones are the unapproachable people in society.

A crone also is usually associated with the dark and old. The crone is generally part of the outskirts of society. They are friends to the outcasts and low class members of society. Nephthys has been described in both the “Songs of Isis and Nephthys” and “The Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys” (Bleeker 14) as young and beautiful women. These images do not fit the archetype for the crone. When looking through Egyptian art and inscriptions, it is nearly impossible to find a picture that takes on the western ideas of an old hag. This plays a big part in the depictions of Nephthys as well as the other funerary goddesses. None of these women were portrayed as old just as women with an association to the Underworld. Therefore, they are not really threatening figures and death is not scary in this culture either.

All goddesses fill a role for those who follow them. Depending on where the follower is, they relate to different goddesses. That is why each religion has created different roles for the goddess to fulfill. The roles of maiden, mother, and crone have given the stages of life a face and someone to talk to in times of trial or thanks. These archetypes were created to make religious figures easy to categorize and therefore less messy to deal with. But because nothing is black and white, no role or archetype will ever be able to completely cover the roles as well as the characteristics of a goddess.

In Persephone’s case, she was able to be a maiden for more than half of the year. She was that maiden when she was with her mother. She never seemed to age but definitely gained many responsibilities when she was abducted into the Underworld. It was here that she gained new roles but never completely shed her maidenhood. She remained young, beautiful, and a good sign to those who had just died. It is easiest to

classify Persephone as a maiden because of her physical characteristics as well as her role as a daughter with her mother, Demeter. She is also a maiden because in the Homeric hymn to Demeter she is shown as naïve, innocent, and stolen away by Hades. Maidens are those in society who are in transition and Persephone spends a sizable amount of her life discovering who she is and how she fits into her role as Queen of the Underworld.

The mother in the Hindu religion was Kali. She is dark, scary, and she decorates herself in the severed parts of humans, even babies. She is definitely not the typical mother and not the western idea of a comforting, responsible mother figure. However, in the Hindu religion, Kali is the goddess who protects those in trouble and is the giver of a greater knowledge. Kali is also the one goddess who makes the entire society feel like they are being looked out for. Her personality has made religion something that is accessible to those who have been placed on the outskirts of society. She is seen as the patron goddess of thugs, thieves, and low caste people. The other part of her motherly role is her ability to make the scarier parts of life less scary. Once a follower is able to see past Kali's bloody façade, they are able to accept death so that they can be released from the life cycle in the Hindu religion. While she isn't approachable at first, her blood and gore seems to only be a front. She is really a protective mother who wants the best for her followers or her children.

Nephtys is the Egyptian equivalent of the archetypal crone. The crone is the goddess image that is most associated with death and the process of dying and grieving. She is closely tied with her sister, Isis, who is also seen tied to the process of dying. Nephtys never is able to be a mother to a child despite her continuous efforts to conceive and raise a child. In most Egyptian myths and reliefs Nephtys is seen near the

recently mummified or trailing behind the coffins as a wailing woman. Nephthys does not neatly fit into her role as crone because of her longing to be a mother as well as her appearance. In many ancient texts, Nephthys and Isis are called beautiful and young women. She is not old and shriveled like the crones of other societies and ancient cultures. In this case, it is Nephthys' responsibilities to her people to help them navigate the uncertain and often scary time of death that allows her to be classified as a crone.

As it has been displayed, no goddess fits one category. This only furthers the idea that these goddesses can be related to personal experiences and certain circumstances. In times of need, it is especially important to have someone to identify with. Death is the most uncertain and possibly the scariest time of anyone's life. To have a goddess that is at a similar stage of life gives each person a goddess that can be approached with some comfort and a little more ease. To be more approachable, these archetypal goddesses are very similar to normal women in the way that no woman fits into one role her whole lifetime. No woman can completely abandon her role as daughter when she moves out of her home. In this way, women have the Persephone maidenhood within themselves. In the same way, mothers are not always the kind friendly people their children want them to be. Sometimes mothers have to be tough and tell their children how it is. Finally, not all crones have to be scary. Especially in current times, the fountain of youth seems to be available to many women. People are living longer and so not all old women are morphed into haggard old women. Some women are able to gain the knowledge of life and some of death while remaining approachable for their community. With this analysis, it has been shown that no goddess can be placed as just a maiden, mother, or crone. Goddesses don't age but they must change, or must be changed, to fit the needs of

those who are worshipping her. The triple goddess theory provides the basic traits for each goddess but does not place that goddess into a nice form because there is always overlap.

Goddesses are deities that appear in almost every religion's set of myths and stories. These goddesses are women who have achieved special status and have been identified as important fixtures in their follower's lives. Because these are not normal women, they already seem to defy categorization. However, these goddesses have not only achieved special status as a goddess but have been placed into important roles within the life cycle. Persephone, Kali, and Nephthys are goddesses that are associated with the scariest part of life, the end, and with that they are associated with the Underworld or the afterlife. In most opinions, these goddesses should be the scariest and most unapproachable, and in fact should probably be avoided. In many societies, death is taboo to talk about and it is left to hover in the shadows or in the fringe of life. However, because of these unique goddesses' roles within the life cycle and their special circumstances they become approachable and key figures for the end of life and a positive experience associated with death. To be a part of the archetypes of maiden, mother, and crone a goddess must be a key figure in religion and then they must be placed in the milestone points of the woman's life cycle.

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